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THE

CABINET CYCLOPÆDIA.

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CONTAINING AN

EMINENT LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC MEN

Biographia.

EMINENT FOREIGN STATESMEN.

VOL. V.

BY G. P. R. JONES, ESQ.

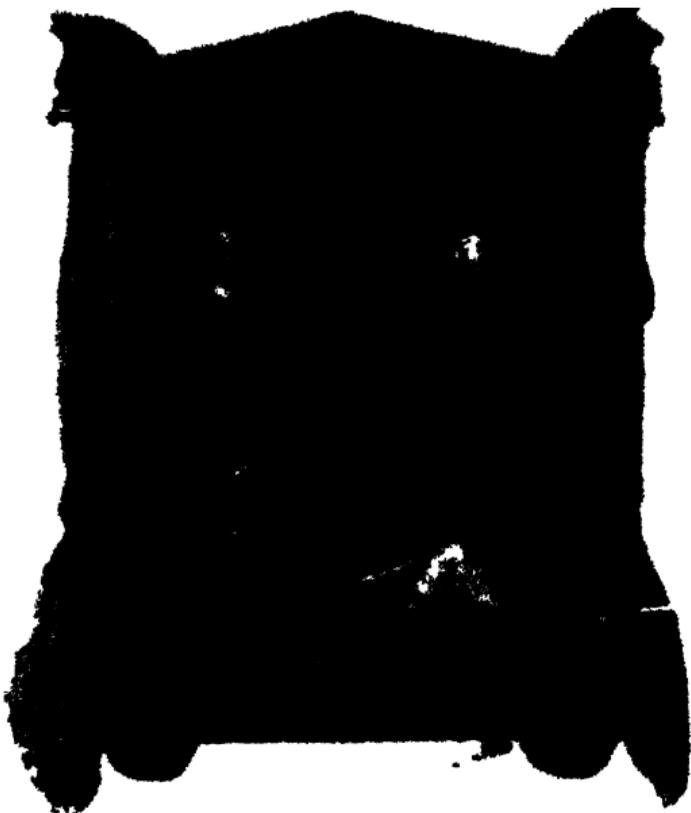
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of the
MOST EMINENT
POLITICAL STATEMENT



ANALYTICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL

TABLE

OF THE

LIVES OF EMINENT FOREIGN STATESMEN.

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LIVES
OF
EMINENT FOREIGN STATESMEN.

ANDREW HERCULES, CARDINAL DE
FLEURY.

BORN 1653, DIED 1743

PURE in character, gentle in manners, disinterested in his purposes, a more striking contrast could not be displayed in every point to the character of the cardinal Du Bois than by that of Andrew Hercules, cardinal De Fleury ; neither was his policy as a minister less strikingly opposed to that of his celebrated predecessor than might be expected from the different dispositions of the two men. Mild and gentle, but by no means subservient, calm, moderate, and perhaps a little tardy, economical even to the bounds of parsimony, Fleury seems to have sought throughout his life, both for himself and others, peace, if it could be obtained without a sacrifice of honour, and to have displayed moderation on all occasions, sometimes, perhaps, with a little sacrifice of dignity. Few have been the faults that have ever been attributed to him ; still fewer have been satisfactorily established against him ; and his biographer may sit down to the task of recording his life well pleased, certain of finding little on which it will be painful to dwell.

Many of the ministers who governed Europe about that time, had been persons raised by their abilities from an inferior station, as we have shown in the instances of Alberoni and Du Bois; and Duclos has attempted to show that Fleury also was the son of a tax-gatherer at Lodèye. Such, however, was certainly not the case, as it is distinctly proved that his family were not only nobles, but of a very ancient race of Languedoc. He was born, it is true, at Lodèye, on the 22 of June, 1653, but he was brought, at a very early age, to Paris, and received his first instruction from the Jesuits of the college of Clermont. He thence passed to another college, called the college of Harcourt, in order to pursue his studies to a further point, and in all the schools he distinguished himself in the highest manner, being endowed by nature not alone with quick and various talents, but with a memory of extraordinary powers and with a taste for study, which is in itself a gift of no slight importance. His person also was extremely prepossessing, his manners gentle, amiable, and insinuating, his talents for society were as great as those which he displayed for literature, and he made friends in all ways from his early youth.

Amongst the first of these friends was cardinal Bonzi, who during the whole period of his influence at the court of France never ceased to exert that influence in favour of the young abbé Fleury. It would appear that his parents had destined him for the ecclesiastical profession from a very early age; but even had not that been the case, it is more than probable that Fleury would have been induced to enter upon a state which opened the only road to great success for a man of high literary attainments, by his college successes, which were terminated by a brilliant account, written in Greek and Latin, of the principal schools of philosophy at Athens. He had by this time taken the title of the abbé Fleury, and in the year 1668, though only fifteen years of age, he was appointed to a canon's stall in the cathedral of Montpellier; which promotion St. Simon attributes to

the regard of cardinal Bonzi.* In regard to Fleury, however, even greater care is necessary in receiving St. Simon's accounts than in regard to most other persons, though he was often prejudiced respecting all. But the character of Fleury was one that he could neither understand nor appreciate, and the punctilious and snarling peer looked down upon the poor abbé Fleury with as much of ducal pride, as the bitter and sarcastic satirist displayed of jealous contempt towards the mild and amiable man whose easy wit and quiet repartee amused without hurting, and wrestled without leaving a wound behind.

Fleury, with all the eagerness of youth was no sooner appointed to his canonry, than he set off at once to take possession of his new dignity ; but he returned almost immediately to Paris, not, as St. Simon implies, remaining at Montpellier till 1674, but pursuing his studies in the capital with great diligence and success. In 1674 and 1676 he passed through the different grades of the university, and became a licentiate in the latter year, though he did not immediately take the last vows, which in the Roman church bind a man for life to the ecclesiastical profession. His great friend and patron Bonzi was at that time high in favour with the queen, and he exerted himself to place the young abbé as one of her almoners, which he effected, though not without some opposition. Fleury had not at this time taken priest's orders, and was only 24 years of age. The opening presented to him, however, decided his conduct at once, and being immediately fully ordained, he applied himself to the duties of his profession.

Even St. Simon himself can find no charge to bring against the morals of the young ecclesiastic, but he says, what is undoubtedly true, that the abbé Fleury was a great deal in the world, and known and courted by the

* All the accounts of St. Simon are to be received with caution. It seemed to be his rule to say as much evil as possible of every one :—where there was probability, to make a direct charge ; where there was no probability, to insinuate ; where there was no possibility, to be silent and believe himself candid.

best society in Paris. His wit, his talents, his pleasing manners engaged the regard of all with whom he was brought in contact ; and though the station which he occupied at the court was not one of very great distinction, it opened the door to the first circles, if it did no more ; and the door once opened, Fleury was sure to make his way with those to whose society he was admitted. It was not, however, alone to persons distinguished by birth or fortune that Fleury devoted himself. The good, and the great in point of talent and learning, were sought by him with even greater ardour ; and we find that he was the intimate companion of Scignclay, Croissy, and Torcy, the son, the brother, and the nephew of Colbert ; that Pomponne was not less his friend, and that the archbishop of Paris, and as the king's confessor La Chaise, were equally eager and zealous in his interest. His post of almoner to the queen from time to time called him into activity in the various court ceremonies of the day ; but he was placed in a more prominent situation by being chosen one of the deputies for Montpellier, in the assembly of the clergy in 1682.

In the following year, however, 1683, he lost the post of almoner to the queen, by the death of that princess, and might have fallen back into insignificance had not the many friends which he had made exerted themselves strenuously in his behalf, and obtained for him the still higher office of almoner to the king. On this occasion, cardinal Bonzi again displayed the same zeal in the service of his young friend which he had always manifested, and overbore the opposition of many interested persons who would willingly have prejudiced the mind of Louis against the abbe Fleury. He had now a more advantageous opportunity than ever of making his way in the highest society of France, and he did not fail to take advantage of it ; but at the same time St. Simon, who makes it a reproach to the young ecclesiastic, that he was too fond of that society, is compelled to allow that "he had the good sense to attach himself strongly, to all the best and most distinguished of the king's

almoners ;" which Fleury could scarcely have done had his life been any thing but regular, and such as was befitting an ecclesiastic.

Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that Louis XIV. had conceived a distaste towards him ; and the spirit of devotion which in that monarch succeeded to the love of pomp, ostentation, and debauchery, as his corporal capabilities declined, made him regard Fleury's fondness for society with a severe and reproving eye, in which the many compensating virtues he really possessed could not find favour. However, in the year 1686, he received from the hands of the king the abbey of La Revour, in the diocese of Troyes, which afforded him the means of maintaining himself at the court with greater ease, his previous revenue having been very limited. In 1692 he officiated in some capacity at the marriage of the duke of Chartres, afterwards famous as the regent duke of Orleans, with the daughter of the king ; and it is a circumstance worthy of remark, that the abbé Du Bois and the abbé Fleury, neither of whom in their most sanguine expectations could at that time have extended their views beyond the attainment of some inferior bishopric, but who were, nevertheless, both destined to become prime ministers and to obtain the Roman purple, had each some share in the marriage of a prince who had no reason whatsoever to hope for any political power, but who became regent and died ruler of that kingdom, which they each governed in turn.

The friends he had made, the situation in which he was placed, and the consciousness of virtues and talents might well induce Fleury to believe that he would soon receive some more important ecclesiastical preferment, as it seldom happened that the king's almoners were left long without the dignity of the mitre. He knew also, that the cardinal de Noailles, that the confessor La Chaise, that the famous Bossuet, and other persons of great influence in the church, eagerly and incessantly pressed his claims upon the king ; but still Fleury was left without any farther preferment, and the solicitation

of some of the monarch's most distinguished courtiers were met by replies which taught them they must abstain from pressing the suit of the young ecclesiastic any farther. Such are the known facts of the situation of Fleury at the court of France about this time, but the only detailed accounts of the transactions which led to his elevation to the episcopal dignity, are taken generally from St. Simon, and have that anecdotal air, which casts a doubt upon many of that celebrated writer's statements.

The duke affirms that the king objected strongly to Fleury, on account of his love of society, and what he considered his worldliness of character, and that he refused with severity every application which was made in favour of Fleury. The abbé was deeply mortified, even to tears, we are told, by various accounts of the king's distaste towards him, and the archbishop of Paris, who took a deep and fatherly interest in the young ecclesiastic, determined to let no occasion slip, for promoting the interests of his friend, nor to suffer himself to be deterred by any repulse on the part of the king. Noailles was a man so distinguished both by his piety and his firmness, that he was less likely than most men to meet with a repulse from Louis, and on the occasion of the bishopric of Frejus becoming vacant in 1698, by the somewhat forced resignation of Aquin, brother of one of the king's physicians, the cardinal de Noailles applied immediately to the king in favour of Fleury.

Louis at once refused, but the archbishop insisted and represented to the king, that it was unjust to reject a man in the situation of Fleury, unless he had some serious fault to attribute to him. At length he urged the matter so strongly on the monarch that Louis took him by the shoulder and shook him, saying, "Well sir, you will have it then, that I should make the abbé Fleury bishop of Frejus in spite of all the reasons that I have given you over and over again. You insist that it is a diocese at the farther end of the kingdom, in an

out-of-the-way country. I suppose I must therefore yield to you, not to be teased any more about it, but I do it with regret; and, remember well, I foretel that you will repent of it."

Such is the account of St. Simon, but there can be little doubt that he has overcharged the colouring of his picture, even if the lines themselves can be considered accurate. On the appointment of Fleury being announced to him by the king, Louis added, "I have made you wait long, but you have so many friends, sir, that I wished to keep this merit with you to myself." Fleury used in after years to tell this trait with great pleasure, probably not knowing that the king had addressed very nearly the same words to madame Scarron upon a similar occasion.

The words, however, used by Louis would seem to show that his objections to Fleury had never been so strongly and ungenerously urged as St. Simon represents them to have been, while they leave no doubt that some objection did really exist in the king's mind which prevented him during a considerable length of time from bestowing a mitre upon his almoner. Fleury, it would seem, was pleased with his elevation to the episcopal dignity, though not very well satisfied at being removed so far from the court. He set out almost immediately for Frejus however, and the first sight of his diocese appears to have been by no means agreeable to him. He is reported to have declared afterwards, "From the first moment I saw my wife I was sick of my marriage," and on another occasion he is said to have signed himself at the end of a jocular letter to cardinal Quirini, "Fleury, by divine indignation, bishop of Frejus."

These are anecdotes which may or may not be true; but it is certain that whether Fleury was pleased with his appointment or not, he applied himself to fulfil the duties of his station with zeal and discretion. From the year 1699, in which Fleury took possession of his bishopric, till 1715, he very seldom quitted it, and by his constant residence in the midst of his flock, did

an immense deal of good to the people of that remote district, and turned from them many evils which might otherwise have fallen upon them. The life of a bishop in the midst of a wild and not very well peopled country, on the shores of the Mediterranean, can offer but little of interest to the general reader, but all accounts show that Fleury, though no longer surrounded by the society in which he shone in Paris, displayed the same mild and amiable disposition, and employed the same talents and activity, but to a far better purpose. He applied himself diligently to improve the condition of the poor of his diocese ; he examined into and provided for the religious instruction of the people; and he established throughout the country a number of small schools, calculated to have the most beneficial effect upon the people.

His efforts in these respects met with a check in the year 1707, by the scourge of war being brought into his diocese. It is unnecessary here to trace the causes of dissension which then raged in Europe, and it may be sufficient merely to say, that in that year the southern part of France was invaded by the duke of Savoy and prince Eugene. Advancing with rapid steps, those two generals pushed their way through Provence and Dauphine, laying the whole country under contribution, and menacing even the large towns. Amongst other districts invaded, was that of Frejus, but the bishop took upon himself the task of interceding for his people, and so skillfully and wisely did he act towards the duke of Savoy, that he not only conferred great benefits upon the whole of Provence, by obtaining moderate terms of contribution for the province, but also won in the highest degree, the esteem of the duke himself, which he employed for the purpose of securing the people from the insolence of the invading forces.

Various diseases broke out in the army of the duke, shortly after the invasion: a French force marched in haste to oppose him, and an expedition which might have proved most disastrous to France was terminated in a few weeks by the retreat of the imperial and Sa-

voyard forces. The duke of Savoy himself never lost the respect he had conceived for Fleury; but the attention which the bishop had paid him might, in the hands of Fleury's enemies, have proved a dangerous sort of complaisance, had not some of his friends exerted themselves strenuously to mitigate the anger of the king. Some persons even asserted that the bishop celebrated *Te Deum* in the church of Frejus, for the occupation of the place by the duke of Savoy. But the scandal is so incompatible with the known moderation of the prelate, and also with the conduct of Louis XIV. towards him afterwards, that it seems unworthy even of consideration.

His conduct in other respects, however, was quite the reverse of that which could give just offence to the king, and daily reports reached the ears of Louis of the benefit which Fleury was conferring upon his remote bishopric and of the love which his flock bore towards him. The respect and esteem of the duke of Savoy did not evaporate in words, and there can be no doubt that he, at one time, though on what precise occasion does not appear, offered the bishop of Frejus the post of preceptor to his son. Fleury declined it, however, and passed the rest of his time, till the year 1715 at Frejus, interrupted, indeed, by occasional visits to Paris, where the same amiable manners and gentle character which had recommended him to so many, continued to gain for him new friends, and to excite old ones to more strenuous efforts in his favour than ever.

On these occasions, he was frequently received as a visitor in the house of marshal Villeroy, who was always high in favour with Louis, notwithstanding his incapacity as a general, and the bishop of Frejus was also intimate with the well-known marquis de Dangeau and his wife, as well as with several other persons who had much influence with madame de Maintenon. The latter, together with the duke of Maine, and several others whose power over Louis XIV. was great, eagerly sought to obtain for Fleury the appointment of preceptor to the heir presumptive to the throne of France, then a delicate and timid

boy, just issuing out of infancy. Whether the bishop sanctioned their efforts, or employed either solicitations or intrigues to obtain that post does not clearly appear ; and though St. Simon asserts that he did, the known moderation of Fleury was so great, and the candour of the duke so little, as to leave the accusation more than doubtful. It is certain that the climate of Frejus had always disagreed with his health, and in the years 1714 and 1715 this was so much the case, that he determined to vacate his see ; receiving in compensation the abbey of Tournus, which was one of no very great importance.

Such a proceeding certainly did not present at the first aspect any very ambitious views, and though his enemies have endeavoured to point out, with laborious malice, interested purposes which might be served by this proceeding, Louis XIV. saw none such therein : but some transactions, in which the *ci-devant* bishop was involved about this time, in opposition to the Jansenists, served to raise him higher in the opinion of the king, than his talents or virtues had previously done.

In his own diocese of Frejus, Fleury had always left the Jansenists in peace, and had steered a middle course between them and their persecutors the Jesuits, whom he neither approved nor liked. However, on retiring from the see of Frejus, he addressed a pastoral farewell to his flock, some passages of which gave great offence to the celebrated Jansenist Quesnel, then an exile in the Low Countries. He instantly attacked Fleury with bitterness and affected scorn, but the hatred of the Jansenists was one of the bishop's greatest recommendations to Louis XIV., and the consequence was, that that monarch, by a codicil attached to his will, named Fleury preceptor of that young prince, who was in a few days to ascend the throne of France, under the title of Louis XV.

As is well known, immediately after the death of Louis XIV., the duke of Orleans, whom the late king had endeavoured to restrict in power even while he nominated him to the regency of the kingdom, carried

down the will of his uncle to the parliament of Paris, and saw that body annul all its principal dispositions, as they had rendered ineffectual those of the will of Louis XIII. The appointment of Fleury, however, was suffered to remain untouched, and probably the regent, whose thoughts went no farther than the term of his own life, which he well knew must be short, thought it of very little importance who was the preceptor of a child, that was still in the sixth year of his age. It was of the greatest importance, however, to the fate of France, for Louis XV. showed in his infancy that peculiar character which was strongly apparent in Louis XIII.; sombre, melancholy, timid, detesting the pomp and parade of royalty, moody and uneven, but attaching himself strongly not so much perhaps to those who obtained a hold upon his affection, as to those who secured his respect, and on whom he felt that he could lean with confidence to support his weakness, and to save him the trouble and annoyance of acting in public for himself. Such was exactly the character to be ruled, entirely by those who obtained, during his infancy, that habitual authority, which was more likely to be acquired by his preceptor than by any body else, if that preceptor were wise enough to strive both for the king's affection, and for his respect.

Such was the case with Fleury; but in order to appreciate the advantages of his situation fully, we must consider the characters of some of the other persons by whom the young monarch was surrounded. With regard to the character of the regent, duke of Orleans, it is unnecessary to speak at large, for it in no degree interfered with the influence of Fleury over the infant king. The superintendence of Louis's education had been attributed by the will of the late monarch to his natural son the duke of Maine, together with the care of his person, and the command of his household; but on finding his father's will treated merely as a piece of waste paper by the duke of Orleans, the son of madame de Montespan threw up the command of the household,

and the charge of the king's person, but weakly retained the superintendence of his education. His character, however, was not such as could at all interfere with the views of Fleury, and he was soon removed altogether from the political world, by his mad participation in the rash schemes of Cellamar.

Under the superintendent again, were two persons superior in rank to Fleury, yet by virtue of their offices so constantly near the person of the young monarch, as to possess the means of obtaining great and permanent influence with him; these were, the marshal de Villeroy, governor of the young king, and the duchess of Vantadour, his governess. For the latter, as might naturally be expected, Louis XV. conceived and always retained the greatest affection, but Villeroy was by no means a man to acquire either the regard or the esteem of the prince committed to his care. He was vain, frivolous, capricious, sometimes subservient and fawning, sometimes harsh and haughty, a bad general, a foolish politician, and a weak man. On the other hand, Fleury had every advantage, gentle in his manners, cheerful in his disposition, learned without being pedantic, of a sound judgment, firm in his determinations without harshness, moderate in his personal desires, simple in character and habits, and if possessed of any very active ambition, at all events wise enough never to let it be apparent, but when it was necessary for the sake of its gratification.

The most different pictures that it is possible to conceive have been given of the demeanour of Fleury towards his pupil, by men of very high talent, and worthy of great consideration. "Monsieur Lemonty, one of the most brilliant, and philosophical, if not entirely one of the most accurate writers of this age, has declared, following the bitter accounts of Voltaire and St. Simon, neither of whom had any thing in their minds at all harmonious with the character of Fleury, that the bishop of Frejus "seduced the child by his caresses, and that his indulgence offered to his timidity the shelter of a confi-

dence altogether puerile, and yet him scarcely perceive that he had issued out of the hands of the women. Fenelon, armed with the double force of patriotism and of genius, had dared to graft virtues on the defects of the duke of Burgundy ; Fleury thought of nothing but of moderating those of his pupil by lulling his faculties. The studies of the king were soft and almost mechanical. He received his notions of religion and morality, as is fitting for the children of the vulgar, under the form of prejudices. They shut him out from all which could elevate his heart or his spirit, and the suspicion of his preceptor extended even to the mysteries of confession."

"Charged with an employment so important," says M. Lecuy, on the other hand, "and upon which was to depend the welfare of a great kingdom, Fleury thought of nothing but of acquitting himself thereof with the most scrupulous care. He applied himself to bring up his pupil to discretion, and habits of business, to make him an honest man, and to inspire him with the sentiments fitted for a great king."

Such are the different views which have been taken of the conduct of Fleury, and I confess I should have some scruples as to adopting the opinion of M. Lemontey, inasmuch as he belongs to what may be called the penetrating school of French philosophers, who have undoubtedly the fault of often overlooking the real motives because they are apparent, while they search for hidden ones, and of sometimes even striding over near facts, for the purpose of arriving at something which shines like truth in the distance. Voltaire tells an anecdote of Fleury, which, if true, either does not speak much for the good bishop's views of education, or shows that he regarded the poet and wit, as somewhat impertinent in his inquisitiveness. He says, that on one occasion he asked Fleury if he made the young king read *Telemachus*, and adds that the preceptor replied, "I make him read better things," and never pardoned him the question.

I am rather inclined, however, to doubt the truth of

this story ; for Voltaire was only nineteen years of age, when Fleury first became preceptor of the king, and was a person of no consideration whatsoever at the court of France, though he endeavoured to render himself so by every means in his power. He was, it is true, an intimate friend of the debauched and extravagant duke of Richelieu. But that by no means gave him access to such men as Fleury, and it is not probable, notwithstanding all his talents, that he obtained such a footing at the court of the regent, as to question the king's preceptor in regard to the instruction bestowed upon the monarch; till the question itself would have been irrelevant. At the time of his first imprisonment in the bastile, in 1717, it is evident that he was any thing but noted at the court of France. He quitted that prison in April, 1718, and the regent, who liberated him, spoke in a tone, which clearly shows that the good-humoured prince, though by no means particular in the choice of his associates, looked upon the son of the Parisian notary as no very great personage ; nor is there any appearance of his having made, in the ten years which followed, a considerable progress at the court of France.

One thing is clear and certain, however, whether the story told by Voltaire be true or false, which is, that Fleury with the utmost care kept from the mind of the young king, all these wild and whirling speculations which, either under the name of philosophy or of religion, infected the court of France, acting as different kinds of poison to men of different characters, making Louis XIV. a bigot and a persecutor, and rendering Philip of Orleans an unbeliever and a debauchee. Very much was to be guarded against at that time, by any preceptor of a young king of France : the wild and penetrating spirit of the Jesuits, the fanatical mysticism of madame Guyon and her disciples, the polemical virulence of the Jansenists, the dangerous sophistries of self-called philosophers. To have suffered any part of the prejudices or theories of these different sects to have been presented to the mind of the young king, would have been to surround the infant

with chimeras, and bid him overthrow them; and though we may doubt whether Fleury did or did not carry his precautions too far, yet we cannot doubt that great precautions were necessary. He had to educate a catholic king for a catholic country; and while he perhaps undervalued Fenelon, (though there can be no doubt the mind of that great man had thus been weakened by age,) though he rejected all solicitations in favour of Rausay, refusing to bring him near the person of the king on account of his vanity, his levity, and his fondness for chimerical disputes, it may be taken as showing his impartiality, that he did in the same manner guard against the Jesuits, even by interfering, as Lemontey says, with the mysteries of confession. This interference was exercised in the following manner. The king wrote down his confession with his own hand, when about to make it to his confessor; it was seen and corrected by Fleury, and then repeated by the young monarch to the priest, who, we are told, did not dare to address any question to his penitent, but simply exhorted him in regard to the confession that he had made, and directed him as to his future conduct. This is brought forward as a charge against Fleury, and I write it down here as an anecdote which does him the highest honour.

However that may be, and in whatever light his conduct may be viewed, certain it is that he gained the respect of the young king, as well as his affection, even to such a degree, that malevolence, unable to account for his influence, had recourse to suppositions, at once unsupported by any proof whatsoever, absurd in themselves, and incompatible with the whole course and character of the man. Had not the age of credulity in some degree passed away, I have no doubt that St. Simon would have attributed the regard which Louis XV. entertained for Fleury, to the operation of magic; but as he dared not do that, he threw out insinuations of more common, but not less hateful means of influence.

It was not, however, with the young king alone that Fleury increased in authority. His contented spirit,

so rare in courts at any time, was a complete marvel under the regency, where avidity, intrigue, and corruption were not merely, as usual, the ministers of ambition, but were the esteemed and successful servants of learning, philosophy, and piety. The court of the regent was filled, not alone with those who sought to advance themselves by any means, but also by thousands who, disappointed in unreasonable hopes, dared to express, by open murmurs, their dissatisfaction and malevolence, and by others, who, like St. Simon, cursed by nature with a discontented spirit, vented it upon all men, whether more happy or miserable than themselves. Fleury, however, asked nothing, complained of nothing, showed himself perfectly well pleased with his situation, and appeared to the eyes of all to seek for nothing more. The regent, and even his corrupt minister Dubois, were pleased with his moderation, but neither could believe that he was without any desire of advancement; and they both sought for an opportunity of conferring unsolicited some rich gift upon a man who had never snatched at what they destined for another, nor inflicted upon them the pain of refusing.

Several anecdotes are told of Fleury, at this period of his life, by Simon, and acts are recorded which that nobleman attributes to vanity; but the man who, as cardinal and prime minister, lived with the simplicity of a private individual of small fortune, was not likely as the king's preceptor to offend by unnecessary ostentation. There can be no doubt that Fleury both entertained a strong personal dislike and a moral hatred of the cardinal Dubois; nor perhaps is it less clear that he endeavoured to guard the young king against him; but in regard to the duke of Orleans, the king's preceptor, as well as all others who approached him, was won by the marvellous grace and courtesy of that libertine prince, and suffered his eyes to be blinded to his many vices by the natural kindness of heart and the multitude of good feelings which on many important occasions supplied in

the regent the want of all principle and the absence of a moral sense.

Not so Villeroi, however, who aspiring to the first offices of the state, felt his vanity as well as his ambition wounded by the little authority he acquired. Dubois he hated and railed against both in public and in private, and he could not refrain from attacking the duke of Orleans even to the young king himself. The regent, however, had greatly won upon the affection of Louis XV. From the very commencement of his reign he had treated him with the most marked respect, affecting to submit entirely to the will of the infant prince in whose name he governed ; but persuading him to all that he judged right, even while he assured him that he had only to command in order to be obeyed. His manner, especially in public, was as reverential as his words ; and Louis naturally loved a man who raised him in his own opinion. The open animosity of Villeroi towards the regent, therefore, was not at all likely to purchase favour with the young king, even had the governor been either liked or esteemed by Louis. Such, however, was not the case, and the duke of Orleans felt quite aware that he could remove the marshal whenever he thought fit.

Good-humour, contempt, and a sort of listless indolence, made him suspend his measures against Villeroi for some time ; but the frequent personal annoyance which he received from that officer, and the full knowledge which he acquired of all the governor's efforts to ruin him in the opinion of the king, at length made the regent decide upon removing him. The only inconvenience was that Villeroi, by his very incapacity and stupidity, had acquired the character of a sincere honest man, that he had contrived to gain greatly upon the affections of the people, and had a strong party in the parliament itself. The duke nevertheless resolved to dismiss him ; but before the final stroke was struck, an incident occurred which is worthy of record, as having given Fleury considerable pain and embarrassment.

On the elevation of Dubois to the conclave he received, as usual, the hat from the hands of the king. Fleury, the monarch's preceptor, was standing near; and after the ceremony Dubois untied the cross which he wore round his neck, and presented it to the bishop, with the remarkable words, "I give it to you because it brings good luck." This cross was of a particular form, which distinguished it from those usually worn by the clergy; and although Fleury could not refuse to wear it without an absolute breach with the prime minister, yet it was, as may well be supposed, extremely disagreeable to him to carry about the world what he might well consider, in this case, less the symbol of Christianity than the mark of the beast.

Still the duke of Orleans lingered, reluctant to take the last steps against Villeroy, and for a year after the elevation of Dubois to the cardinalate nothing was done to effect the purpose he had long meditated. Two circumstances, however, combined in the year 1722, to confirm the duke's determination, and to make him act vigorously. The young king was now approaching the period of his majority. Villeroy had acquired the habit of commanding him, and together with his influence in the parliament and with the people, that habit might become dangerous to the duke of Orleans. The second circumstance was a violent quarrel between Villeroy and Dubois. The latter had made some advances towards the former, and was consequently more than ever despised by the self-conceited marshal. The cardinal de Bissy, however, induced him at length to visit the prime minister, and the interview, we are told, began with reciprocal compliments and civilities; but Villeroy, who affected the tone and language of a French tragic actor, was carried on from one high sounding phrase to another, till from beginning by treating Dubois with what he thought dignity, he was carried on to sonorous reproaches, and thence easily stepped forward to insult and indignity. Dubois was astonished, and remained silent, and Villeroy con-

cluded the scene by laughing⁹ at the power of the all-powerful Dubois, and telling him, with an air of derision, that the only thing wanting to his absolute authority was to cause him, the marshal de Villeroy, to be arrested. This concluded the long series of errors which Villeroy had committed. Dubois took him at his word, and his arrest was immediately determined upon.

One of the grossest and most insulting follies of Villeroy had been a vehement affectation of apprehension for the king's safety, especially in regard to the duke of Orleans, who upon the death of Louis would naturally have succeeded to the crown of France, in virtue of the renunciations of the king of Spain. This pretended apprehension had been displayed strongly and strikingly during a severe illness which afflicted the king in 1720, when Villeroy and some others of his cabal did not scruple to insinuate that the regent had poisoned the young monarch. He had boasted also that the duke of Orleans should never be alone with the king for a moment; and though the good-humoured prince, who knew the whole facts, had not hitherto resented them, there can be no doubt that he felt some amusement in extracting from the ridiculous bravado of Villeroy matter for baiting a trap in which to catch him.

On Sunday, August 12. 1722, the duke of Orleans presented himself in the afternoon, as usual, to transact business with the king. At these conferences Villeroy was always present, and sometimes Fleury, as on the present occasion. After having spoken to Louis on general affairs, the duke of Orleans begged the young monarch to pass into another cabinet, where he had something to say to him alone. Villeroy immediately fell into the trap, instantly opposed the proposal of the regent, claimed a right, as governor of the king, to be with him constantly, and asserted that it was his duty not to quit him. The duke of Orleans at first replied with most encouraging gentleness; and Villeroy, thinking he had to do with a second Du-

bois, wrought himself up till he clothed insolent opposition in insolent language. The regent then assumed another air, and fixing his eyes upon him with a stern frown, told him he forgot himself, and mistook his situation, and making a low bow to the king quitted the apartment.

Scarcely was the deed accomplished, when the king's governor began to remember the difference between the low-bred and debauched minister and the regent of the kingdom, and fears and apprehensions succeeded to daring. Even while boasting of what he had done to some persons about the court, he added, that very evening, that he hoped he had not offended the duke of Orleans, and declared that he would go the next day to the regent to explain his conduct, and show him that he only wished to do his duty. This, as Villeroy probably intended, was immediately repeated to the regent; but the effect was different from what the governor could have wished. At the hour when he was expected, the apartments of the duke of Orleans, which were on the ground floor, looking out upon the gardens of Versailles, were filled with officers and musketeers, concealed, as far as possible, or apparently waiting an audience. Some of the light horse of the guard were in the garden, and a sedan chair was hidden in one of the recesses. Towards noon, marshal Villeroy presented himself, and entered the anti-chamber as usual, with all the airs of a comedian. The officers present gathered round him with looks of respect; and he demanded, in a loud and pompous tone, "Where is the duke of Orleans?" The company replied that he was in his cabinet, occupied with business. Raising his tone still higher, he said that he must see him nevertheless, and advanced towards the door of his cabinet. But at that moment the captain of the regent's guard presented himself before the marshal, informed him that he was under arrest, and demanded his sword. Villeroy showed some disposition to resist, but the sedan chair was set before him; he was forced to get in; and, being carried through the windows

out into the garden, was placed in a carriage at the garden gate, and hurried off, under a small escort, to Villeroy, from whence he was afterwards transferred to Lyons. So calmly and quietly had the whole business been conducted, that his own attendants, who had remained without when he went in to visit the duke of Orleans, continued waiting in expectation of their master's return, till he was far on the road to Villeroy.

Notwithstanding the king's dislike and want of respect for Villeroy, the news of his arrest affected him more than was expected; but his agitation was greatly increased by the sudden flight of Fleury, who, from motives which it is scarcely possible to understand, quitted the palace as soon as he heard of the arrest of the governor. Whether he entertained apprehensions for himself, or whether he resented not having been made acquainted with the step proposed, is difficult to divine; but he fled that very night to the country house of the president de Lamoignon without informing the king or any one else of the place of his retreat. The king was in despair, wept bitterly, refused his food, and would pay no attention to any thing the duke of Orleans could say to calm him. Fleury, however, was soon found, brought back to the palace, and loaded with kindness and civility by the regent, who made him a formal apology for having arrested Villeroy without his participation. Villeroy, on his part, accused Fleury highly of ingratitude, and declared that they had mutually promised on the commencement of the regency to stand or fall by each other. St. Simon asserts that to some persons Fleury did not deny this engagement, but excused himself for breaking it on account of his duty to the king. The story is improbable, however, as, even by St. Simon's own statement, Fleury did not owe his appointment to Villeroy, and St. Simon acknowledges that the bishop did not in general admit this charge, but contented himself with speaking of Villeroy in terms of regret and commiseration. That he was glad to be freed from him there can be very little doubt; and the duke of Charost, who succeeded

to the post of governor, interfered but little with the proceedings of the preceptor.

St. Simon's personal hatred towards Fleury, and his desire to misrepresent all his actions, is so evident, that even in an instance where it is scarcely possible to find the most remote cause for suspicion, he attempts to show a wr^{ng} motive for one of the most marked acts of the bishop's disinterestedness. Some time before the arrest of Villeroy, the death of the cardinal de M^lilly left vacant the archbishopric of Reims, without any exception the most important ecclesiastical dignity at that time in the gift of the French crown. The rank of cardinal was usually attached to it, the revenues were immense, the patronage great; and the regent duke of Orleans, who knew and appreciated the character of the bishop of Frejus, and was well aware of the extreme attachment which the king bore towards him, judged that he could not do better, both for the gratification of Louis and the good of the state, than to offer this rich benefice to the king's preceptor. He accordingly went to the king as soon as it became vacant, and made the proposal to the young monarch, in order that he might have the pleasure himself of notifying his elevation to Fleury. The young king was delighted, and Fleury was immediately sent for to the cabinet, where the conference had taken place; but to the surprise of all, the bishop declined the dignity. He founded his refusal upon two motives; first, that his duties as archbishop would remove him from the person of the young king, whom he loved; and secondly, that having already given up a bishopric on account of his age and declining health, it would be both wrong and indecent to accept a higher and more laborious task.

The regent earnestly and strenuously combated these objections. He represented to him that the archiepiscopal dignity was by no means incompatible with his station as preceptor to the king; that, under circumstances much less requiring it, prelates were constantly permitted to have a bishop *in partibus*, who

performed a great part of their functions for them, and that his grand vicar would fulfil the rest. He also showed him the difference between the climate of Reims and of Frejus, and, in short, said all that it was possible to say, in order to induce him to accede. But Fleury remained firm. He said that he would never accept so important a post with the purpose of leaving the duties in the hands of others; and though he expressed the deepest gratitude to the regent and the king, he remained unshaken. The duke of Orleans would not admit of his refusal at once, but telling him that the king insisted on his taking time to consider of the offer, sent St. Simon to persuade him to accept the post. The duke undertook it willingly, having, as he says himself, his private motives for wishing Fleury to receive the archiepiscopal dignity. Fleury, however, still refused; and St. Simon, in recounting the circumstances, endeavours to prove, to use his own words, that "Fleury looked to the future more than to the present."

I think it probable, indeed, that he did; but the future to which he looked must have been not of this world, for he was by this time approaching the age of seventy. What St. Simon means by those words, indeed, is, as he afterwards explains, that Fleury imagined his archiepiscopal dignity might be made an excuse, after the king attained his majority, for removing him from the person of Louis; that he calculated upon obtaining great influence when the king did reach his majority, and either attaining the supreme power at the death of the duke of Orleans, or even driving that prince himself from the councils of the king. These are the motives which St. Simon gratuitously attributes to the prelate; but the very supposition bears upon its face the extravagance of malice. Fleury could scarcely hope to outlive the duke of Orleans, who was a young man compared with himself. That he should hope to supplant that prince is very nearly as absurd, and is rebutted both by the very fact of his never having made any effort to do so, and by his having, on that prince's death, proposed the

duke of Bourbon to succeed him. Besides, was it likely that an ambitious man at the age of seventy should give up the highest episcopal dignity in France merely for the chance of obtaining, at some far removed period of time, an uncertain share of power in the councils of the king? The archbishopric of Reims, from the peerage attached to it and from its proximity to Paris, must have brought him constantly to Paris and to the court of the sovereign. Till the majority of the king, he had the word of the duke of Orleans for no effort being made to remove him; and if his influence over the mind of the young monarch was to be exerted at all for the purposes of his own ambition, the period of his obtaining his majority was that which Fleury must have chosen. He would then also have been in his seventy-first year, and consequently could not expect to enjoy his power so long as to admit of the delay of a single day.

If any thing could have convinced St. Simon, which indeed nothing could when he had made up his mind to see bad motives under good conduct, it would have been an event which happened immediately after the offer of the archbishopric of Reims. Besides that archbishopric, the cardinal de Mailly left vacant the rich benefice of the abbey of St. Stephen at Caen, and this was immediately offered to Fleury, on his positive and ultimate refusal of the archbishopric. Although for his station he was undoubtedly poor, scarcely deriving from his other benefices the revenue of a private gentleman, he refused more than once a piece of preferment which, without requiring any duties at his hands, would have more than doubled his income. He suffered the duke of Orleans, however, at length to persuade him, and accepted the abbey, after having resisted all importunities for two or three days, saying that what he had was enough, and that he did not seek for anything more.

Even in this proceeding, St. Simon struggles, though in vain, to discover some unworthy motive, saying

that he does not know whether it was that he had determined to receive nothing from the hands of the duke of Orleans, or whether he merely wished to gain credit by the mummery of disinterestedness. After this last endeavour to detract from the character of Fleury, however, St. Simon, as if compelled by some inward feeling to speak more candidly, adds the following remarkable words, which may well be considered as an antidote to all his insinuations against Fleury : "I must, however, allow," he says, "that he was never interested. Since that, he has long had every thing in his power ; he has never taken any benefice ; it does not appear that he has recompensed himself much in any other way. Likewise, when arrived at the highest point of all-powerfulness, together with the cardinalate, his domestic establishment, his equipage, his table, his furniture, have always been even below those of any inferior prelate."

Such is the confession of St. Simon himself ; and honour be for ever to the man of whom such a confession must be made by an enemy. This surely were sufficient ; but yet it is necessary here to relate, that he gave another and perhaps a still stronger proof of his want of ambition, by refusing a thing that he might have accepted without any compromise whatever, namely the ~~riband~~ of the order of the Holy Ghost, the first honorary distinction in France. At the same time that he refused it, however, for himself, he asked and obtained it for the archbishop of Lyons.

Notwithstanding all these proofs of disinterestedness on his part, both Duclos and St. Simon accuse him of having, from personal motives, shown ingratitude to various members of the family of Castries, immediately connected with Bonzi, his first patron, and themselves amongst his earliest and best friends. Those two writers contend that he was already desirous of obtaining the cardinal's hat, and thought the best way of arriving at that object was to court the family

of the cardinal de Rohan, who was at the moment very influential at Rome. Thus when he was applied to for his recommendation of a fit person to fill the see which he refused himself, he recommended the abbé de Rohan Guimené, and strongly opposed the abbé de Castries. That he did make that recommendation, and oppose his friend de Castries, there can be no doubt; but there is a great doubt in my mind as to whether the cardinal's hat had any thing to do with the question; and St. Simon, in his virulence, seems to have forgotten that he himself had declared a few pages before that Fleury, as archbishop of Reims, could not have failed to obtain the cardinal's hat* and a seat in the council; so that if such were the object of his ambition, the road was open before him, by accepting the archbishopric.

The fact is, however, that Fleury had a motive, and a strong one, for his conduct. A dispute was raging at that time in France, particularly affecting the ecclesiastical world, regarding what was called the constitution which had been promulgated by the pope, in order to put a stop to the schism of the Jansenists. A great part of the French clergy, though not Jansenists themselves, objected to receive the constitution in France. The cardinal de Noailles and the family of de Castries had been amongst its most steadfast opponents. Fleury had shown himself long, though mildly, its decided advocate. He could scarcely be expected to recommend to one of the most important dioceses in France a man who differed with him entirely in opinion as to the reception of a bull which he considered absolutely necessary to the quiet and tranquillity of the French church. That he was wrong, with all the rest who supported the constitution, that the bull itself was absurd, violent, and calculated more to irritate than to soothe, does not at all affect the question as to whether Fleury was moved by personal ambition or by conscientious feelings. The real cause of his behaviour was before

* St. Simon, vol. xviii. p. 412. complete edition, 1829.

these writers, but they leaped over it; and any one who examines his conduct cannot doubt for a moment that zeal, somewhat fanatical, and perhaps a little affected by personal enmity towards the Jansenists, was the sole motive which influenced Fleury in preferring a person comparatively a stranger to his own immediate friend.

From the removal of Villeroy the regent and Dubois derived the greatest advantage and also the greatest comfort. The constant annoyance which the duke of Orleans had received from the intrusive impertinence of the marshal was now at an end. He saw the king alone when he pleased, and he also found that Fleury applied himself diligently to remove from the bosom of the young monarch the dark and horrible suspicion of a constant design of poisoning him, which Villeroy had not scrupled to instil into the mind of Louis XV. Events of great importance, however, were now hurrying forward, and affecting a change in the relative positions of all parties; for which change all parties except Fleury were in a state of active preparation. The king was approaching the period of his majority, which caused considerable anxiety to all those who surrounded him. But as I have already, in the life of Dubois, given an account of the political intrigues which that event occasioned, I shall not repeat the details here. The person who derived the principal benefit from the changes which took place at the king's majority was the cardinal Dubois, who, while he left the duke of Orleans that vast power which he possessed as first prince of the blood and heir presumptive to the throne, monopolised all the active authority in his own hands, and enjoyed it to the last undiminished.

In the meanwhile, Fleury and the duke of Orleans, as well as Dubois himself, applied themselves diligently to correct or extirpate the evils which had been implanted in the mind of the king by the unwise and interested marshal Villeroy, and to furnish the young monarch with such a preparation of mind as might

enable him at a future period to hold firmly the reins of government in his own hands. The disposition of the child himself was naturally bad, and certainly neither the amusements permitted to him, nor the instructions afforded him by his former governor, had been calculated at all to improve a character where scarcely a redeeming virtue was found to counterbalance its many faults. Of a sombre and melancholy turn of mind, and, if we may so speak, naturally misanthropical, the first amusements of the king were to retire from all society, and with a small cow, which had been given to him, to act the part of a herd in the park of the Muette ; or else, after being forced to take a part in some ceremony, to console himself for the detested exertion by casting off the king and cooking his soup for himself. To indulge these habits was in itself wrong ; but how much more infamous was it to foster the bloody and tyrannical propensities in his nature by stimulating his languid spirit with the sight of hawks turned loose in a vast hall filled with sparrows, to teach an infant of between six and seven years old to find a delight in the agony and death of defenceless creatures pursued by their natural enemies !

Another infamous act, however, was committed, in teaching and encouraging the young king to play at every game of cards, and to find a delight in the excitement of the gambling table. Before he was ten years old he was one of the most skilful gamblers in France, and every hour that he could spare he devoted to the most demoralising of pursuits. All this was evil in a high degree ; but we are assured that indulgence in such amusements was not the only fault to be attributed to Villeroy in the education of the king. On the contrary, we find that his instructions were of a character to lead the ill-disposed child forward rapidly into the tyrannical monarch. On the occasion of the young king's recovery from a severe illness, when the whole of Paris went mad with rejoicing, and the squares before the palace and the

gardens behind were filled with a dense multitude vociferating their joy, Villeroy dragged the timid child by the arm to the window, and instead of drawing from the magnificent scene that presented itself the fine moral that it might have suggested, and the high inspiration with which it ought to have moved the teacher of an infant king, he sought to fill the young monarch's mind with nothing but ideas of his own greatness and importance, derived from that sight; employed the acclamations of the people to swell the vanity of a proud boy, and told him that all he beheld was his, and at his disposal. To correct such lessons and such indulgence was no easy task; and therefore the vices and the follies which he displayed in after life cannot fairly be attributed to Fleury, whose post of preceptor did not permit him to interfere with Villeroy. After such evil seeds, implanted in his mind during infancy, it was in vain that Fleury or Massillon endeavoured to teach the king that monarchs were made for their people, not the people for their monarchs, it was in vain that they showed him the moral and religious responsibility of his situation, it was in vain that the regent strove to point out to him that kings could only be happy in the happiness of their subjects.

The first act of Louis XV, after attaining his majority was to sign an order for the exile of Villeroy; but the young monarch was no more the master of his own power than he had been before. Dubois ruled supreme under the incapacity of his youth and the indolence of the duke of Orleans. But the rule of Dubois was not long; and dying with blasphemies in his mouth on the 10th of August, 1723, he left the post of prime minister again vacant for any one whose influence and ability were sufficient to seize it. Had Fleury, as St. Simon endeavours to show, entertained the slightest intention of snatching from the hands of the duke of Orleans the power which he possessed as regent, he had now a far better opportunity of gratifying his ambition. Fleury made not the slightest movement, and the

duke was immediately appointed prime minister ; but the duke of Orleans was not destined long to survive Dubois.

A life of debauchery, of the most extraordinary and excessive kind, intemperance in all things, and a total neglect of his health, had hurried with that prince the march of time ; and shortly after he had resumed the active government of the kingdom on the death of Dubois, all those symptoms of approaching death made themselves manifest which gave warning to the courtiers to provide against an approaching change. During the greater part of every morning the duke was dull, heavy, and in a sort of lethargy ; his face nearly purple, his head falling on his chest, his articulation imperfect, his steps insecure ; and it was only towards the afternoon of each day that he shook off this lamentable state, and resumed his ordinary wit and grace. It was very evident to all that this state could not long continue, and no one knew the fact better than Fleury ; neither did any one know better than he did that he had scarcely any effort to make, that he had no intrigue to follow, no partisans to secure, in order to step at once into the place of the duke of Orleans on the death of that prince. All was prepared for his elevation, the way was open before him, and one single step forward would have placed his hand upon the goal. Fleury, however, showed not the slightest inclination to take that step.

Had Fleury, however, been blind to the state of the duke of Orleans and to his own influence, there wanted at persons to open his eyes to both ; and, strange to say, the chief of those persons was no other than the duke of St. Simon. But it is fair to give the account of the duke's conduct in his own words : — " I lived very intimately," he says, " with the bishop of Frejus ; and since hereafter, in default of the duke of Orleans, we were destined to have another master than the king, till the time arrived at which he should be able or wish to be master himself, I liked better that it should be that prelate than any other.

I proceeded then to seek him, and I told him what I had seen that morning of the state of the duke of Orleans. I predicted that his loss would not be long deferred, and would be without any previous announcement. I advised the prelate then to make his arrangements, and take measures with the king, without losing a moment, in order to fill the vacant place, which would be the more easy as he could not doubt of the affection of the king for him, as he (the king) had none for any one else who approached him, and as he had daily long private conversations with him (Fleury), which offered all the means and facilities of assuring his speedy appointment to the place of prime minister the very instant that it became vacant. I found," he continues, "a man, to all appearance very grateful for this information, and for this hint, but modest, moderate, who judged the place above his station and his reach."

The conversation as detailed by St. Simon was long, and each entered into more full explanations of their views. Fleury contended that it would be much better to place a prince of the blood in the situation of prime minister, than a private individual; that no one unsupported by that rank could avoid exciting envy, jealousy, and public odium; and that the duke of Bourbon, known under the title of M. le Duc, who had taken a considerable part in public affairs since the death of Louis XIV. was the only person upon whom he could fix for that important station.

St. Simon, in return, pointed out all the inconveniences likely to arise from appointing a prince of the blood to the post of prime minister at all, but dwelt more particularly upon the faults of the duke himself. He represented, not without justice, that he was dull, almost to stupidity, unconquerably obstinate, inflexibly firm, insatiably interested, with persons about him, numerous and sharp-sighted, who were as interested as himself. Fleury, however, still continued to retain his opinion, declaring that no other person presented himself to his mind capable of filling the station except M.

le Duc, and rejecting all St. Simon's pressing solicitations to secure the post for himself. The courtier left him, evidently mortified and surprised. This was the second time that St. Simon had received such a rebuff from the bishop of Frejus, and probably therein we may discover the cause of that virulence which he always displays towards the king's preceptor.

The event however, which St. Simon had foreseen, was not long before it occurred. Not many days after the conversation with Fleury, the household surgeon of the duke of Orleans found himself compelled to inform him, that if he did not change his manner of life, he would either be arrested in his course by sudden death, or fall into a state of imbecility. The idea of sudden death had, always been pleasant to the duke, who had no religious principle whatsoever; but the other menace held out to him, affected him more, and he promised faithfully to put himself completely at the command of his medical attendant in the course of the next week, and to live sparingly in the mean time. The very same day, however, he who rarely took any dinner, dined heartily, and after dinner went to pass an hour with one of his mistresses, the duchess of Phalaris, till the time arrived at which he was to transact business with the king. It was now the month of December, and the duke was seated beside Madame de Phalaris, before the fire, in the little cabinet where he waited, when suddenly, without the slightest indication of the approaching event, he fell over in his chair, so that his head rested on her shoulder, and she found that he was both speechless and without sense. Terrified at what had happened, the duchess called loudly for assistance, but nobody came. Every one, knowing that it was the duke's hour of transacting business with the king, had gone to seek their own amusement, and it was fully half an hour before she could find any of the attendants, and as long before either a surgeon or physician could be procured. When they arrived; however, the duke of Orleans was dead.

In the mean time the king and the bishop of Frejus had been informed of the event ; and the person who had carried them the news, named La Vrilliere, ~~avizing~~ who would be the successor of the dead minister, came in all haste to the duke of Bourbon, and while that prince dressed himself to go to the king, drew up a patent, in the form of that given to the duke of Orleans, appointing M. le Duc prime minister. They then proceeded together to the king, and the moment the doors were shut behind them on their entrance, Fleury himself proposed the duke of Bourbon to the monarch as prime minister ; Louis signified his approbation by a sign of the head, the form of oath was produced and taken, and before the duke of Orleans had been dead an hour, his cousin was fully installed in his post. All writers admit, that had he been so inclined, Fleury might have, at that moment, taken possession of the supreme power with the same facility wherewith he conferred it upon another. But he made not the slightest attempt of the kind. He showed none of the hesitation of timid ambition. His conduct was calm, deliberate, firm, straightforward, and there is not the slightest reason to attribute to him any thing but good motives.

One of the most important epochs of the life of Fleury had now arrived. The Duke of Bourbon was all, or worse than, St. Simon had represented him ; he had none of the qualities of his ancestors but courage ; but then, with the exception of the new duke of Orleans, who, at the period of the death of his father, was a young debauchee, and who, after his father's death, became a superstitious devotee, M. le Duc was the first prince of the blood, and a person of the greatest influence in France. That he had long aimed at supreme rule every one knew ; and there could be very little doubt, that though Fleury would have been successful if he had opposed the prince's desires, a schism would have been caused in the state, which must at that time have produced disastrous results.

Entirely ruled by his mistress, the marchioness de Prye, a greedy, exacting woman, of immeasurable ambition attended by a world of petty passions, the reign of the dull duke of Bourbon was not likely to be very beneficial to France, though his exclusion might have proved highly detrimental to the country. We have seen that the patent for the post of prime minister had been drawn up beforehand, in the same terms as that of the duke of Orleans, but there was one part, however, of the patronage of the office of prime minister which was withheld from M. le Duc, or rather was taken from him after his appointment had been made.

The only honour which Fleury demanded on the death of the duke of Orleans, was a place in the king's council, which was immediately granted to him; and, though every one knew him to be all-powerful with the king, no one saw the slightest change in his manners or appearance, except that he now was always present at the council table, and freely gave his advice and opinion, which he had never thought of doing during the life of the prime minister's more talented predecessor. Every hour, however, must have convinced Fleury more and more of the incapacity of the duke of Bourbon, and of his utter inadequacy to the station in which he was placed. Taking possession immediately of the apartments of the dead duke of Orleans, the new minister fixed up over his door the hours for transacting business with the various subordinate functionaries: all that was base and creeping and interested filled his antechamber, and his violent and contemptible mistress saw herself surrounded with an innumerable multitude of fawning courtiers, and treated with the utmost adulation and deference by those who felt for her in their hearts nothing but hatred and scorn.

If the reign of intrigue had been begun by the duke of Orleans, it was now carried to its height under his successor; but Fleury almost immediately determined that though the state might be governed by the mar-

chioness de Prye, the church, at least, should not be subjected to such a corrupt rule. It is very possible that he had regretted his recommendation of the duke of Bourbon very soon after he had made it, and that he grieved that he had not taken the helm of government into his own hands at any risk. But it was a much more difficult thing to deprive the duke of power than to exclude him from it; so that, for the time, all that Fleury attempted to do, in order to counteract the evil, was to diminish his authority as far as possible, and to take to himself that share which he, as a churchman, judged to be the most important to the country. Without, therefore, making any insulting allusion to the duke's moral and religious feelings, he calmly pointed out to him, we are told, that the disposal of the benefices of the kingdom would be better in the hands of an ecclesiastic, and required that he should give up to him, what was then called the *feuille des bénifices*, or, in other words, the ministry of ecclesiastical affairs.

The duke dared not refuse. In the first place, he knew that he owed his elevation solely to Fleury; and in the next place, his conscience told him that the proposal was reasonable, wise, and just. His mistress, however, was furious at the consent which he gave, and in all probability determined from that moment to make those efforts against Fleury which proved the ruin of herself and her paramour. The bishop, however, having taken the ecclesiastical administration into his own hands, held it firm though he shook off every part that might have gratified his vanity or his ambition. He still lived in the small ill-furnished apartments assigned to him. He suffered no crowd of greedy courtiers to attend upon his steps, and with the disposal of all the immense wealth of the Gallican church, he appropriated nothing to himself, but disposed of every thing with conscientious disinterestedness, biassed undoubtedly by religious prejudices, showing neither any very peculiar discrimination nor any remarkable want of it, but always evidently seeking

to do what was right, and to promote the virtuous, the pious, and the sincere.

He has been accused, unjustly, of persecuting the abbe Montgon, who certainly employed himself most usefully and skilfully in Spain, as an envoy from France. Lemontey calls him, the useful and devout priest; but Lemontey himself makes no scruple in other parts of his work to show that Montgon was a hypocrite of the most detestable character, who used the appearance of devotion solely for the purposes of intrigue and ambition; and Montgon's own memoirs, but still more his private letters, fully justify the imputation cast upon him by Lemontey. If his character is easily seen through by a writer of the nineteenth century, how much more easily may we suppose it to have been penetrated by Fleury himself, and how little reason was there for a man of Fleury's views and principles to show any favour to a man whom he might pity for his want of real piety, but must have contemned for his hypocrisy.

It will be unnecessary to follow the political course of the new minister, and we shall therefore only notice those occasions in which Fleury himself was called upon to take a part in the affairs of state. The first important transaction was that which took place in regard to the marriage of the king, which was certainly one of the greatest importance to France, but in respect to which the bad conduct of the duke of Bourbon and his mistress, had very nearly proved the ruin of the state, by calling upon a childish king, and a weak government with exhausted finances, and a population weary of war, a formidable combination of enemies, and a long continued series of hostilities.

At the conclusion of the treaty of peace between France and Spain, which followed the first opposition of Philip V. to the assumption of the regency by the duke of Orleans, it had been stipulated, in order to confirm the newly re-established tranquillity of the two countries, that a double marriage should take place between the Bourbon

houses of Paris and Madrid, and the Infanta of Spain was promised to Louis XV., while mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the duke of Orleans, was plighted to the prince of the Asturias, the eldest son of the king of Spain. The absolute marriage of the parties, on account of their youth, could not of course take place immediately, but the French and the Spanish princesses were exchanged on the frontiers of the two kingdoms, and the ceremonial part of the union between the prince of the Asturias and mademoiselle de Montpensier was fully performed on her arrival in Spain. Such, however, was not the case in France: the marriage ceremony was delayed, and every thing like an *érrevable* vow avoided.

In this position had remained the relations of the two countries up to the death of the regent duke of Orleans; but the duke of Bourbon, on being placed in the post of prime minister, solemnly promised the Spanish monarch to cause the espousals of Louis XV. and the Infanta to take place as soon as she was seven years of age. There can be little doubt that he already contemplated the breach of that engagement. The death of the young king without heirs, as the duke and his mistress very clearly saw, must immediately deprive him of all power, by conveying the crown either to the Orleans branch of the royal family, or to the king of Spain. The health of the young monarch was weak, and no certainty of his prolonged life could be entertained; but he was now between fifteen and sixteen, and if his engagement to a girl not seven years old, could be done away, an heir might be expected from his marriage with another princess, and thus the permanence of the duke's influence be rendered more probable.

Under the cautious direction of madame de Prye, and several of their artful confidants, M. le Duc, before he took any steps towards sending back the Infanta, cast his eyes around the various unmarried princesses at that time in Europe, in order to choose a bride for Louis XV. The number of these ladies reached the extraordinary amount of ninety-nine; but although the cabalistic perfections

of that number might have influenced persons of more sense than M. le Duc, not many years before, yet the duke of Bourbon could now find no one in the list who appeared perfectly suitable. Some objection existed to all, though, strange to say, some efforts were made to obtain the hand of a protestant English princess for the catholic king of France. While these doubts and hesitations were going on, however, a sudden illness seized upon the king, which assumed so severe a form, as for nearly two days to leave little hope of his recovery. The terror which this event occasioned in the breast of the duke of Bourbon caused him, on the king's convalescence, to determine on marrying the young monarch to some one immediately. The Infanta was sent back with disgraceful want of courtesy; and it was resolved that the bride of the king should be the daughter of Stanislaus Leczinski, the dethroned king of Poland.

Whatever Fleury might think of the breach of the solemn engagement of the king, by sending back the Infanta, it is certain that he did not oppose that act in the council; and it is certain also that after it had been determined upon, he did all that it was possible for him to do to mitigate the anger of the king of Spain, drawing up apologetic memorials, and writing to him secretly with his own hand, to show the imperative necessity of marrying Louis to a princess who might afford speedily an heir to the throne of France. That Fleury did not strenuously oppose those unjust measures which the duke of Bourbon took, in this affair, to serve the purposes of his selfish ambition, was both a fault and a weakness; but that he should endeavour, by every means in his power, to turn away from France the evil results which were likely to ensue from the act committed, was both right and natural. All he could do, however, was not sufficient to avert the storm; and the indignation of Philip and his queen soon found means of vengeance.

Before the absolute proposal was sent to the dethroned king of Poland, one more effort of the most absurd nature was made, not only to obtain the hand of

the English princess, but to cause her to abjure her religion. It met with little but ridicule, however; and a negotiation also failed for the hand of a Russian princess. There was no likelihood that the negotiation should so fail with Stanislaus. Shut up in the small fortress of Weissembourg, in Alsace, Stanislaus, deprived of every thing he possessed, lived upon the bounty of the court of France, with his daughter, his wife, his mother, and a few attendants, passing his days in the most sober economy, and with the simplicity of the early ages. Maria Leczinski was somewhat older than Louis XV. himself, not particularly handsome, but retiring, modest, and gentle, and totally unacquainted with the intrigues of state. Such was the character exactly suited to the purposes of the duke of Bourbon and madame de Prys, and the princess was speedily brought to Paris, and united to the king.

In the mean-time, however, as we have shown in the life of Ripperda, rapid and extraordinary combinations were made by Spain, for the purpose of producing a similar coalition against France to that which had before humbled the pride of Louis XIV. In order to overthrow their schemes, the duke of Richelieu was despatched to Vienna, and the abbé de Montgon, covering the political intrigues with which he was charged under the garb of devotion, was sent to Madrid. By this time, however, the duke of Bourbon had begun to conceive a distaste to Fleury. Whether the bishop had in reality, though we find no proof thereof, censured the duke's conduct with regard to the Infanta, or whether it was that he was jealous of Fleury's influence with the young king, and feared his presence in the council, I cannot say; but it is clear, that, almost immediately after the Infanta had been sent back, the duke of Bourbon began to conceal all his proceedings, except those which were of little consequence, from the king's preceptor; and amongst those so concealed were all the private instructions to Richelieu and Montgon. Richelieu, however, who was strongly attached to the bishop of Frejus,

confided to him the whole ; but though Fleury found that the duke of Bourbon, whom he had assisted to favour, was labouring to deceive him, he took no steps to avenge himself, and proceeded, as usual, without showing any resentment.

The duke had gone too far not to go farther, and he and his mistress concerted a plan for gradually withdrawing the king from the influence of the prelate. Fleury was constantly present while the duke transacted business with the young monarch ; but judging that the influence of the queen might, in these first days of their union, be sufficient to overthrow the influence of the preceptor, the duke and madame de Prye determined to employ her to break through the constant habit of Fleury's attendance while the king was engaged with his minister. With this object Maria was, on one occasion, induced to detain the young monarch with her at the hour appointed for business. Fleury waited for him in vain in his cabinet, but the duke of Bourbon was brought into the apartments of the queen, and there concluded the affairs of the day with the young monarch.

No sooner did he hear these facts, than Fleury saw the danger of his situation, and his determination was taken in a moment. He had long before become a great benefactor of the seminary of St Sulpice, at Issy, where he was accustomed to go from time to time, to repose and refresh his mind in retirement ; and without waiting for any farther indication of the machinations against him, he ordered his carriage in order to proceed to Issy. While waiting for the vehicle, he wrote a respectful letter to the king, taking leave of him for ever, and informing him that, as he saw, from what had lately occurred, his services could be of no further use to him, he had determined to retire from the world. As soon as this was done he set off for Issy, and waited the result.

The preceptor had nothing to rely upon for his recall, but the regard and veneration of his pupil ; but that re-

gard and veneration was so strong, that the sight of his letter, and the news of his departure, cast Louis into a lamentable state of grief, despondency, and indignation, which, had there been any thing manly in his nature, would easily have found means to put an end to that which grieved him. Instead of making that attempt, however, Louis gave way to tears and deep gloom. The young queen endeavoured to win him from his melancholy, but Louis would only stay with her a moment, retiring immediately to brood in solitary sadness over the loss of one he so much loved. The duke of Mortemart however, who happened to be the gentleman in waiting, after having witnessed for some time the agony of mind which the king suffered, could not refrain from suggesting to him the means of assuaging his grief. He advised him then, at once to recall the bishop; and offered to carry immediately an order to that effect to the duke of Bourbon.

The king was relieved and overjoyed, and instantly accepted Mortemart's offer. That gentleman lost not a moment in hastening to the duke, and commanding him, in somewhat angry terms, to send an order for the recall of Fleury. He found the duc de Bourbon in a state of agitation and consternation which his message was not calculated to allay. M. le Duc had undoubtedly only calculated upon withdrawing the king gradually from the preceptor's influence, not upon coming at once to a rupture with the prelate. The sudden retreat of Fleury, therefore, which the duke had made no preparations to follow up by vigorous measures, surprised and confounded him; and it was in vain that a number of the courtiers, thinking that his triumph was complete, flocked to pay their respects to him on the retirement of his rival.

Some authors say that he disputed for a time the commands received by the mouth of Mortemart, while others declare that he obeyed them immediately, as if they had proved a relief. Certain it is, however, that during that very evening he wrote the following letter

with his own hand to the bishop of Frejus, by which it will be seen that the prelate had previously written to him also, probably reproaching him with his conduct.

“ Your letter, sir, has surprised me in a degree that I cannot express. The king desires your return, and commands me to inform you that he wishes you to come back. Not having the time to say more upon this business, I will delay it till the first time that we see each other, and I content myself, for the present, with executing the orders of his majesty.”

Fleury returned; but it is worthy of remark, that before he quitted Issy, the far-seeing Horace Walpole, the elder, then British ambassador at Paris, paid him a visit at the place of his retreat, while persons of less judgment were courting his rival. On his return, Fleury showed the same moderation which characterised him through life. He made no attempt to triumph over the duke; and the sole reparation that he required was a just and reasonable one—that the marchioness de Prye and her creature Paris Duverney should voluntarily retire from the court. That reparation was made, at least in appearance; for the duke of Bourbon now felt that Fleury might dictate, and that he himself could not resist. Madame de Prye, however, and Duverney, undoubtedly flattered themselves with the expectation of being able, at some future time, to regain a portion at least of that influence which they had lost, and, soon reappearing on the scene, they still strove to govern the affairs of France.

But the time was rapidly approaching when the evils of the government of the duke of Bourbon, and of his interested policy, were destined to rouse the indignation of the French people to such a pitch as to compel the king to seek another minister. All Europe was at this period in agitation, in consequence of the insult which Spain had received, and leagues offensive and defensive were making in every quarter. England and France, allied together, strove eagerly to gain the powers of the north, in order

to counterbalance the combination between the cabinets of Madrid and Vienna. With Holland they were successful, because the trading company of Ostend, supported by the emperor of Austria and the king of Spain, was endowed with privileges which rendered it likely to interfere with the trade of the Dutch. There is no negotiator like self-interest ; the arts of the most skilful diplomatist in the world could have produced in Holland no argument equal to the existence of the company of Ostend, in favour of France and England. Such, however, was not the case with Prussia, the monarch of which country speedily displayed a determination to adhere to the empire and Spain. The court of Petersburgh was easily brought over to the same cause ; and the powers of Europe seemed very nearly balanced, except that France had at the head of its government a weak, blundering, and brutal prince, and a cunning woman in whom presumption went hand in hand, as usual, with incapacity.

France then acted, as might have been expected, with sloth, with timidity, and with weakness. Not so England. Scarcely did her enemies know that she was making preparations, when her fleets were on the seas and her thunders in the ports of the adverse countries. Such acts of vigour had the effect that might be supposed. We have shown the results which took place in Spain, in the life of Ripperda ; and the fall of that minister shook the warlike councils of the Spanish monarch ; while the lingering inclination for peace evident in the court of Vienna was not without its effect at Madrid, and some farther acts of vigour on the part of Great Britain, with news that vast preparations were being made in France, contributed to bring the weak and timid court of Philip to a sense of its impotence.

Those vast preparations, however, which were at length made in France, formed the immediate cause of the ruin of the duke of Bourbon. The people, already oppressed with impositions, were now loaded with fresh taxes, in order to meet the exigencies of the state. Some of those taxes were peculiarly oneroas, and bore heavily, and espe-

cially on the agricultural classes. The people murmured, and even resisted: the outcry was so general, the aspect of the nation was so threatening, and the provincial parliaments showed so strong a disposition to support the populace, that it became evidently necessary for some person to interfere, in order to save a monarch still beloved from the rebound of those evils which the blind folly of his minister cast heedlessly upon the heads of the people.

Madame de Prye and Paris Duverney had by this time made their appearance again upon the scene, and managed the affairs of the government so openly that the anger of the people was still more called towards them than before. The principal courtiers who could have given the duke advice or assistance now took care not to afford him any, while every kind of court was paid to the bishop of Frejus, whom every body looked upon as the only person who could interfere in the present conjuncture. The conduct of Fleury I shall describe in the words of one who, even if he was impartial, was certainly in no degree favourable to the bishop: — “ The advice which was refused to M. le Duc,” says Lemontey, “ besieged the bishop of Frejus. On all sides they conjured him to put an end to the misfortunes of the state; but every thing proves that the old man, contented with his condition, and already burdened with seventy-three years, only embraced with repugnance the necessary policy. It pained him to undo his own work. He pressed M. le Duc several times to calm the storm, by sending away the two favourites at whom the public hatred pointed. He carried the same prayer to the queen herself. This was acting neither as an enemy nor as an ambitious man. Rebuffed by refusals, he yielded at length to his duty as a citizen, to his affection for the king, and perhaps also to the fear of perishing himself in the general overthrowing of all things.”

Such is the account of Lemontey; and it would appear, as he says, that Fleury hesitated even to the

last ; and that after having arranged the whole affair for the exile of the duke of Bourbon, he besought the king to delay it for several days, in the vain hope of producing a change. At length, however, on the 11th of June, 1726, finding that there was no hope of inducing the duke to abandon utterly madame de Prye and Duverney, a complete change in the government was effected by Fleury. That day had been appointed for a journey to Rambouillet ; and the court set off a short time before the duke of Bourbon. In leaving his cousin, the young monarch smiled upon him graciously, saying, " Do not make me wait for supper, cousin ;" and then proceeded on his way, while the duke de Charost, who had succeeded Villeroy in the post of governor, and still remained attached to the king's household, staid at the palace, by the direction, it would seem, of Fleury.

Several hours elapsed before M. le Duc was at all aware that he was already disgraced ; but shortly before the period at which he was to have set out, the duke de Charost presented him with a letter from the king, signifying to him that he was to retire instantly to Chantilly. The duke of Bourbon, apparently perfectly thunderstruck, obeyed the order instantly, and retired to his princely residence of Chantilly in the silence of despair. Various other acts of rigour of the same kind followed. Madame de Prye received a *lettre de cachet*, exiling her from the court to her estates of Courbe-épine, in Normandy. Paris Duverney was confined in the Bastille, and his brethren were deprived of all share in the administration of a country which they had aided to ruin. There remained one personage to be dealt with, who could not be removed from the ear of the king, and who, it would seem, had been entirely gained by the assiduities of the duke of Bourbon, to whom she owed her fortunes, and by the hypocritical appearance of devotedness in the marchioness de Prye. This was the young queen, Maria Leczinski ; and whether she had made some efforts to interrupt the proceedings of Fleury and the king, or had remained submissive, certain it is, that she received

a letter from Louis himself, addressed to her in a tone certainly neither very affectionate nor very courteous. It was to the following effect: —

"Madame, do not be surprised at the orders which I give. Pay attention to that which M. de Frejus will tell you from me; I pray you and order you to do so."*

No one could now doubt that Fleury was triumphant over all opposition, and that, having made up his mind to act with vigour, he would take the administration entirely into his own hands. The administration of the duke of Bourbon and his cabal had become so hateful to the whole of France, that his fall was received with the most extraordinary demonstrations of joy and satisfaction from one end of the country to the other; and though means were taken to prevent any indecent expressions of delight, it was scarcely possible to prevent the people, who made the capital ring with acclamations, from illuminating it also.

Although perfectly justified in the steps he had taken, though applauded by all France, and hailed by his fellow-countrymen as their deliverer, Fleury thought himself called upon to justify himself even to the duke of Bourbon, and for that purpose addressed to him a sort of memorial, in which he criticised, in mild terms, but with a firm hand, the whole course of his administration. The duke himself, however, had by this time recovered from his first surprise. Abandoned by those who had courted and advised him, and cast upon his own resources, he had nothing to oppose to Fleury but invective and reproach. His conduct and his language were so violent, that the bishop could not make up his mind to pass them over in silence, and he consequently addressed him in a letter, which, while it went to justify the writer's own behaviour, gave the duke clearly to understand that the consequences of his outrageous and insulting demeanour, if persevered in, might be much more terrible to himself

* There are two copies of this letter extant: the one I have given is from the historical manuscript of the arsenal, No. 220, and is cited by Lémontey; the other letter was still more imperious in its tone.

than he imagined. The tone of firmness and determination which that letter displayed, at once silenced the violent and obstinate, but timid and irresolute, prince, and the rest of his days were passed in retirement and in regret, if not in remorse.

Madame de Prye at first could scarcely believe that her exile was more than temporary, but it was soon notified to her that her post of lady of the palace to the queen had been bestowed upon another; and from that moment she saw that her fate was sealed. Despair and disappointment took possession of her. Her person retained all its beauty, her mind displayed externally the signs of cheerfulness and resolution, but the serpent of disappointed ambition was in her heart. She complained to her physicians of being ill, but they could find no symptom of any malady. They looked in her face, and saw health and beauty, and decided that her complaint was imaginary. At length, after having been fifteen months an exile, madame de Prye died, without the slightest apparent decay having taken place previously in her physical powers. She expired, up and-dressed, in the twenty-ninth year of her age, having on that very day been told by the physicians that she had no real disease at all.

The ministry of Fleury began under favourable auspices, though no doubt surrounded with various difficulties. He was loved and respected by the king, his accession to power was hailed by the people with gratitude and delight, and the opportunity of insuring peace to Europe seemed open before him. All the subordinate ministers of M. le Duc were immediately dismissed. Several experienced ministers who had been sacrificed to particular interests in former years were recalled, and every one expected to see the appointment of Fleury as prime minister publicly announced. Such was not the case, however, and he not only declined to take that title and office himself, but there can be no doubt advised the king strenuously to suppress the post altogether. It is true that he exercised the supreme power without

any limit or restriction whatsoever; but he did all he could to conceal the hand that moved the figures on the scene, and to rule without the appearance of ruling.

The first care of Fleury was to diminish the burdens of the people; and he applied himself to do so by the only two means that were possible: first the most rigid economy in the state; secondly, the most exact and systematic order in all matters of finance. To establish these two means, which were not only sure to arrive at a great ultimate benefit, but even in their operation gradually produced ameliorations, seems to have been the chief object of Fleury's government. There were many things in which he might have introduced a better system than existed at the time; but Fleury was in his seventy-fourth year, and he restrained his efforts to such things as he could hope to accomplish, and which were beneficial at once. In the very first instance, he remitted the tax of the fiftieth, which had been one of the most galling impositions created by M. le Duc; and to sum up his proceedings in regard to finance, we may use the words of Duclos, who says, "Under the minister of whom I speak, the collection of the revenue was less harsh, and the payments more exact. In a few years he rendered the expenses and receipts equal, ameliorating the latter by economy alone."

In another place, the same writer adds, "If he has sometimes carried economy too far, those which it troubled murmured at it, and endeavoured to persuade the people that he did not see things in a great point of view; and a thousand fools who saw things neither in great nor in little, repeated the same assertion; but the people and the citizens, that is to say, the most numerous and the most useful part of the state, had cause to praise a minister who governed a kingdom like a family. Whatever reproaches may be made against him, it were much to be desired for the good of the state that he had no successors but of his own character, with an authority as absolute as his own. One thing is decisive: people did not regret the regency, and they cursed the ministry

of M. le Duc, but most willingly would they resuscitate his successor."

Such were the feelings of a writer of the St. Sion school, not many years after the death of Fleury. That prelate had shown moderation in every thing ; and the only thing in which any wish for his own personal aggrandisement can be perceived, was pursued with the same calmness and forbearance which he had displayed through the rest of his life. Even in the pursuit of the dignity of cardinal, to which Fleury now openly aspired, there might be motives totally independent of and different from pride. He had refused the title of prime minister, while he enjoyed the influence and exercised the functions thereof ; but we must remember that in the councils of the king, where he had to direct, and in fact to rule, there were several princes of the church of Rome, and Fleury, unless he had also obtained the hat, must have appeared as an inferior at the very table from which he governed the kingdom of France.

The next nomination of cardinals, according to the usual order of things, was that called the nomination of the crowns, at which France had a right to name one cardinal to the conclave. That nomination was distant, however, and Fleury of course was anxious to receive the hat at once. His character was so pure, his intentions so pacific, his reputation so high in the courts both of Vienna and Madrid, that there can be no doubt whatsoever that neither Spain nor the empire would have made any opposition to his elevation at once, and that the pope would willingly have nominated him as it is called *proprio motu*. Some little intrigue and cabal, however, would have been necessary to produce this result ; and Fleury on all occasions avoided, as far as possible, every thing having such a tendency. The king, therefore, by the direction of the bishop, proposed him at once to the supreme pontiff, at the same time notifying to Spain and the empire, that in consideration of Fleury's receiving the hat immediately he would waive the right of

France to nominate at the next general elevation. Not the slightest opposition was made, and on the 11th of September, just three months after he had assumed the government, the pope raised Fleury to the conclave. The hat was immediately bestowed upon him by the hand of the king, as was usual, and when the minister advanced to thank the monarch for the favour, the young king, as happy in the act as Fleury himself, embraced his old preceptor in presence of the whole court, with the affection of a son for a father.

To two great objects Fleury now applied himself diligently: the first of which was, as we have said, to introduce a gentle but firm reform into the financial system of the country; and though the whole course of the regency, and of the ministry of M. le Duc, had left that system loaded with faults and errors from which it was impossible entirely to disentangle it at once, yet Fleury laboured to do so as rapidly as possible, making use, indeed, of the corrupt financiers who had sprung up under former ministers, but taking means at the same time to ensure that the people should not be plundered by them, nor the king defrauded. Besides the suppression of the fiftieth, Fleury signalled his entrance upon the duties of minister by some invaluable regulations regarding the currency, which were announced just a fortnight after the fall of the duke of Bourbon; and two months after the disgrace of that prince, the general taxes, which had been farmed under the duke at fifty-five millions, were let at the sum of eighty millions, with the addition it is true, of some small branches of revenue, but of none which in the aggregate were by any means sufficient to account for this great improvement.

The other great object of Fleury was to restore peace to Europe. Since the formation of the treaty of Vienna by Rippetda, France and England had, as we have shown elsewhere, been endeavouring strenuously to create a formidable league in opposition to Spain and the empire, but no exact declaration of war had taken place, nor did any collision of importance occur till the beginning of the year

1727, though England covered the seas with her fleets, and landed a considerable body of troops in Minorca. Peace, however, was broken at length by the siege of Gibraltar, which was undertaken without sufficient means, and ended in repulse. About the same time the English and Imperial ambassadors retired from London and Vienna, and shortly after another English fleet proceeded to the Baltic to join the Swedes, and keep in check the navy of Russia; while a third proceeded to America, and threatened the rich possessions of Spain in the New World.

Fleets from France also entered the Mediterranean; but in the mean time Fleury and Horace Walpole were eagerly labouring in Paris to bring about a general pacification; and at length, on the 31st of May, 1727, the preliminaries of a general treaty of peace were signed in the French capital. A congress was appointed at Aix-la-Chapelle; but in the mean time the king of Spain refused to raise the siege of Gibraltar, and only consented to grant a suspension of arms, and to reduce his operations to the form of a blockade. The place appointed for the meeting of the congress was afterwards changed to Soissons. Ere long a complete reconciliation took place between Louis XV. and his uncle, the king of Spain, and, after some further negotiations, in the month of March, in the following year, the siege of Gibraltar was raised.

In June, the congress of Soissons was opened, Fleury appearing as the chief representative of France, and receiving the ministers of other powers in the grand hall of that town, in which, to avoid all questions of precedence, a large table completely round had been placed, so that no seat might be considered, as higher or lower than the others. It would be tedious to follow all the proceedings of Fleury, either for the purpose of restoring and maintaining peace in Europe, or of economising the revenues of France, for it has been justly said of his ministry, that the history of one month is the history of all, with the exception of a

short period, diversified by the short war which took place in 1733 and 1741.

So even, indeed, and undisturbed was the course of his government, that we only find it interrupted by a single attempt to shake his power, which took place in the earlier part of his ministry, when a few foolish young men whom he himself had placed about the king, for the purpose of leading the young monarch to vigorous sports and manly exercises, became possessed with the notion that they could overthrow the government of the cardinal. They accordingly took occasion to work upon the king himself, but Louis is said to have told the whole immediately to his former preceptor. Fleury contented himself with sending one or two of the principal conspirators into the country, and left the others at the court unmolested, except by the ridicule in which the good-natured old man indulged at their expense, giving to the plot the name, which it afterwards retained, of the conspiracy of the Marmousets.

The chief accusation against the government of Fleury is, that, either through ignorance, inadvertence, or a false spirit of economy, he suffered the marine of France to fall into a state of decay, from which it never fully recovered. This is a great and serious charge against a prime minister; but nevertheless it would seem to have been merited in some degree. Fleury either deceived himself, or was deceived; and in the close alliance which existed between England and France at that period, he saw no probability that France would require any great and formidable navy on the seas for many years. His confidence in this respect was founded on a just basis, but it by no means justified the sad state of decay into which he suffered the French marine to fall; for there can be no doubt that a state of active preparation is no less necessary to secure peace by commanding respect, than to repel aggression after it occurs. The consequence of such neglect to a state, and the evil and folly of despising any means of defence, was shown in the case of De Witt. Nevertheless, even though Fleury, very

likely, did pay less attention to the affairs of the marine than they deserved, no very evil consequences resulted, at least, for many years ; and it must be also remembered, as an excuse, that for seven years no war occurred in Europe requiring the presence of any great naval force. A period of profound peace was certainly not that in which efforts in favour of the marine could be best exerted ; but Fleury took opportunities of causing the fleets of France to put to sea whenever there was a reasonable excuse for so doing ; and we find that naval enterprises took place under his administration against Tripoli, against Genoa, and for the protection of the French commerce in the Mediterranean.

Another instance of narrow calculation is recorded of him which led to important results ; but before we come to treat upon that subject, it may be as well to take a review of the intervening events, where they are found to be sufficiently important to require notice. In the year 1730, some hostile feelings began to display themselves between Spain and the empire, and it seemed very probable that the succession of the duchies of Parma and Tuscany would ere long produce a complete rupture between those two crowns. Nevertheless no immediate collision resulted ; and the only effect was, that the Bourbon families of Paris and Madrid were drawn more closely together, by the jealousy which the latter conceived of the court of Vienna. At length, on the 10th of January, 1731, the duke of Parma died without children, and by different articles in preceding treaties the emperor was bound to permit the occupation of that duchy by Spanish troops. At the moment, however, when it was necessary for him to keep his engagements, he could not make up his mind to do so, and endeavoured to evade the fulfilment of his promise by so many excuses that the king of Spain was at length forced to summon France, England, and Holland, according to agreement, to join their forces with his to compel the emperor to execute his part of the preceding treaties.

Those states, however, still had recourse to the means

of negotiation ; but the attitude they assumed was firm, and the emperor obliged to yield, at length permitted a force to enter the territory in dispute, consisting of six thousand Spaniards, who were speedily followed by the infant don Carlos. Though gratified by this result, the Spanish monarch did not fail to retain feelings of resentment towards the emperor in consequence of the opposition he had met with ; and the ties between Spain and France were more closely drawn than before.

In the following year the peace of Fleury's administration was disturbed by a dispute with the parliament in regard to some religious affairs, into which it is unnecessary here to inquire. Suffice it to say, that for a certain time the spirit of the Fronde seemed to have revived after a lapse of more than eighty years. But Fleury mingled firmness with moderation, and after suffering the parliament to go forward to a certain point, he followed the steps of Dubois, and suddenly exiled the factious body to whom he was opposed. Having allowed it to remain in exile for between two and three months, in order to show it how little necessary it was to the welfare of the community, he suffered the members to return ; and on their supplication, in humble terms, granted a part of those demands which he had formerly refused when urged in a haughty and dogmatical manner.

But these contentions were small, in comparison with the difficulties which were about to assail Fleury in the course of the following year, 1733, and to force him to abandon that pacific line of policy which he had hitherto pursued. Frederick Augustus, king of Poland and elector of Saxony, died at Warsaw, on the 2d of February in that year. His Saxon dominions fell naturally to his son, the electoral prince ; but the crown of Poland, which was elective, was only to be obtained by the means of corruption, and secured by foreign influence. Two competitors of considerable importance appeared upon the scene as aspirants to the crown of Poland. The first of these was the elector of Saxony, son of the

late king ; and the second, Stanislaus Leczinski, who had formerly obtained and lost the same crown. He had promised, on the marriage of his daughter with the king of France, to abstain from every attempt to regain the crown of Poland : but ambition has seldom any memory for promises ; and not only did Stanislaus openly aspire to recover the Polish crown, but he engaged Louis to throw all the influence of France into the scale, though the young monarch notified to the ambassadors of the neighbouring powers that he would not suffer any one to impugn the freedom of election in Poland.

Every exertion was made for Stanislaus by France ; and the consequence was, that in a diet assembled for the election of a king of Poland, in August and September, 1733, Stanislaus Leczinski was unanimously elected. But, unfortunately, such elections in Poland have seldom proved final ; and in the present instance both Russia and the empire had determined to seat the elector of Saxony upon the Polish throne. Fleury has been accused of denying to Stanislaus any succour but of the most trifling kind in his attempt to establish himself in Poland ; and Voltaire asserts that the only assistance which the king's father-in-law received from the minister amounted to 1500 men, while he speaks of these troops as sent at once ; but, though living in the midst of the times, he has confounded entirely the facts. Almost at the same time that Stanislaus set out from France for Poland, Fleury despatched from Brest a French squadron, having on board a small military force, for the purpose of affording a nucleus of regular, disciplined troops for the formation of a Polish army, in case of foreign invasion.

It is true that Fleury had every reason to suppose that Poland would be invaded ; it is true that he knew a convention had been entered into between Russia and the empire, for the purpose of seating Augustus on the Polish throne, even by force of arms. But we must not forget that Fleury had every reason to believe that an overwhelming majority of the people of Poland

were in favour of Stanislaus, and he had no right to imagine that a nation which boasted that at the sound of the trumpet it could bring 100,000 nobles into the field, would not strike one vigorous stroke either for the king that it had elected, or for the freedom which it held dear. Such, however, was the case: a Russian army entered Poland at once, and marched in triumph to Warsaw; the friends of Stanislaus very generally abandoned him; the Russians became masters of the country, and the newly elected king, with a small portion of those who had called him to the throne, retired to Dantzig, and prepared to hold out that strong post, in hopes of succour.

In the mean time the Russians called together another diet, which, according to the orders it received, immediately elected the elector of Saxony; and that ceremony being over, the Russian commanders in marched to Dantzig, and invested the place. As soon as the turn which affairs had taken in Poland was known, Fleury sent off a fresh reinforcement (which is probably that to which Voltaire alludes) to aid the king Stanislaus; but in the mean time the first squadron, which had put into Copenhagen for a time, arrived at Dantzig, and disembarked the troops early in March, 1734. This reinforcement, which would have aided greatly to maintain Dantzig against the Russian troops, now endeavoured to force their way into the town. But by this time the Russians had made themselves masters of the principal forts in the neighbourhood, and the French troops were repulsed in the attempt, and driven back to their ships. The squadron immediately returned to Copenhagen, where the second body of French troops had by this time arrived.

On finding that the French troops had been repulsed, the count de Plelo, at that time French ambassador in Denmark, full of the military spirit of his nation, determined to wipe out the reproach of defeat, put himself at the head of the French troops, and they again set sail from Copenhagen, on the 21st of March. Their

arrival and disembarkation in the neighbourhood of Dantzic was effected with ease, and the French once more attempted to force their way into the city. But all their efforts were frustrated by the superior Russian force, and they were compelled to retreat with considerable loss, the gallant count de Plelo, as he had imagined from the first would be the case, dying at the head of his troops. The French, however, found it impossible to re-embark in safety, and consequently were forced to entrench themselves in their camp, which they defended with great courage and constancy against a very superior Russian force for nearly a month, but were at length compelled to capitulate and become prisoners of war. Dantzic itself held out for 135 days, and was then forced to surrender; but Stanislaus made his escape in the disguise of a sailor, and passed through the Russian fleet unquestioned.

It is probable that Fleury from the first had determined to leave to the Poles the task of maintaining their own freedom of election with no farther assistance from France, of a direct kind, than might give them support and encouragement in case they were really zealously disposed to defend their own liberty and maintain the king they had chosen. In this determination it is very possible that he might be guided, not only by the calm consideration of what is abstractedly just and reasonable under such circumstances, but by various other motives, by a knowledge of the jealousy which any great efforts on the part of France in the north would produce amongst the maritime powers, by the certainty of immense difficulties in supplying, directing, and reinforcing a large French army in so distant a country, and by the prospect of effecting much more by exerting the strength of France vigorously in other directions.

Fleury had never sought for war. He had always strenuously avoided it. But now that the conduct of the emperor and Russia forced it upon him, we find that he carried it on with as great vigour, with equal success, and with far less expense, than had ever

been done in the best and brightest days of Louis XIV. While he left the Poles to sustain their own rights, if they chose to do so, he made instant and vigorous efforts to effect such a diversion as would prevent their enemies from employing the overwhelming force both of the empire and Russia against them. His first step was to secure the co-operation of some of the neighbouring powers, and disarm the jealousy of others. Thus England and Holland were maintained in a state of neutrality by the most positive assurances that the French meditated no new conquests, and by the clearest explanation of the motives and views of the French minister. The king of Sardinia and the king of Spain saw before them the most immense advantages likely to ensue from uniting their forces with those of France to attack the emperor in his Italian dominions; and Sweden was ultimately gained to give some support to the party of Stanislaus in the north of Europe.

In the mean time, the preparation of armies and fleets in France went on with great rapidity. A considerable force was gathered together on the banks of the Rhine, and marshal Berwick was called from the retirement in which he had lived for many years to take the command and meet death in a foreign country. Another army was collected in the south of France, and placed under the command of the celebrated Villars, for the purpose of aiding the king of Sardinia to drive the Imperial troops from the Milanese, while Spain prepared, with some minor assistance from France, to invade Naples and Sicily, and to wrest from the hands of the emperor a territory which had long been coveted by the Spanish monarch. The whole plan of operations, which is principally attributed to Fleury himself, is upon so grand and yet so prudent a scale, as to show what the man might have been had he been animated by a spirit of ambition and encroachment.

But well conceived and combined as that plan was, it is more than probable that he would not have been permitted to execute it, had it not been for

those very qualities which prevented him from undertaking such enterprises with a view of aggrandisement. One of the highest compliments that can be paid to Fleury is to be found on this very subject in the memoirs of the duke of Berwick. "He attacked the emperor," says the writer, "and conquered him. The English and the Dutch, the natural allies of that prince, took no part in the quarrel. They remained neutral and friendly to Louis XV., who owed this neutrality and his success to the reputation of a just and pacific prince, which he had acquired during the ministry of cardinal Fleury, and which he preserved even in the bosom of victory, by the moderation which he displayed."

As might be expected, success attended all his efforts. Berwick almost immediately crossed the Rhine, and made himself master of several posts of importance on the German side of the river. The campaign had only commenced in the end of October, and therefore the siege of Philippsbourg, which was one of the principal objects of the marshal, was put off till the commencement of 1734. In the following year, a large army having been collected, Berwick divided it into three corps, the first of which took possession of Treves, and some other places of inferior importance, while Noailles, at the head of the second, attacked Kaiserlautern and Homburg, and forced the lines at Ettlingen. Other measures obliged prince Eugene to abandon the camp which he had taken up for the defence of the Rhine, and Berwick had laid siege to Philippsbourg, when he was shortly after killed by a cannon shot. The command of the army then fell upon Baron Asfeld, who continued the siege, and after innumerable difficulties, caused by the inundation of the Rhine and various other natural obstacles, Philippsbourg was taken on the 18th of July.

The success of the French arms in Italy was even greater than on the Rhine. Villars and the young king of Sardinia carried on their operations in the Milanese with such rapidity, that, though the campaign did not commence till the month of November, Pavia,

Milan, Cremona, Triffo, and several other smaller towns, with a vast tract of country, had fallen into the power of the invading armies before the end of the year. Villars, however, had now reached extreme old age; and finding his health failing, he retired to Turin in the commencement of the following year, and died at that city on the 7th of June. His death, however, did not put a stop to the French success. The Imperialists, indeed, surprised and defeated marshal Broglie on the banks of the Sechia; but the battle of Parma, before that event, and the battle of Guastalla, which took place afterwards, far more than compensated for this reverse. In the following year, almost the whole of the north of Italy fell into the hands of the French and Piedmontese, and the Imperial troops were driven back upon Trent, retaining possession of little but Mantua.

On the side of Germany, the French army maintained the field, though no farther successes of any importance can be said to have been gained; but, in the mean time, events of still greater importance were taking place in Naples and Sicily, which events affected the destinies of Europe more than any transactions which had occurred for many years. We must remember, that in consequence of the accession of a Bourbon prince to the throne of Spain, by one of those political amputations which generally follow the wounds of a severe war, Naples and Sicily were lopped away from the Spanish monarchy, and made over to the house of Austria. The Spanish troops, however, aided by those of France, now rapidly recovered the whole of those territories, and drove the Imperialists from the south of Italy. A French naval force co-operated with that of Spain for the dismemberment of the Austrian territories in that quarter; and Fleury, in the course of this brief war, showed that the marine of France had not been so much neglected as his enemies had asserted.

While these events were going on in Germany and in Italy, another occurrence had taken place which eventually became of importance. By a sort of mutual under-

standing, the territory of Champaigne on the one side, and of Luxemburg on the other, had remained in a kind of tacit neutrality; but the French troops had entered Lorraine, and it had been announced to the duchess dowager of that country, that, for the safety of the district and the security of the French kingdom on that side, it was absolutely necessary she should receive the troops of France into Nancy. The duchess had not the means of resistance, and submitted with a good grace, while the count de Belleisle assured her, on the part of Fleury, that not only no portion of her revenues should be touched by France, but that her sovereign authority should remain undiminished, — a promise which, I have no reason to doubt, was strictly adhered to.

The maritime powers, however, although convinced of Fleury's moderation, could not sit by without some uneasiness, and see the two branches of the house of Bourbon march on together through such a rapid series of conquests; and the cabinet of St. James's interfered early, proposing, with the consent of Holland, certain articles as the basis of a general treaty for the pacification of Europe. This took place in the beginning of the year 1735; but the terms proposed were such as France was not inclined to agree to, and Fleury, pointing out that no indemnity whatever was offered to France for her great efforts and expenses, nor to Stanislaus for the wrong he had suffered, continued the war till the month of October, when a preliminary treaty of peace was signed, by which the following important arrangements were effected.

The duchy of Bar was transferred to the king Stanislaus, on his making a formal abdication of the throne of Poland. The duchy of Lorraine was guaranteed to him at a future period; and both these territories were to revert to France at his death. In order to compensate the young duke of Lorraine, for thus stripping him of the territory of Bar, immediately and ultimately of the duchy of Lorraine itself, the grand duchy of Tuscany was guaranteed to him and to his heirs, on the

death of the grand duke then living. In the mean time, he retained the revenues of Lorraine, which he was not to yield till absolutely in possession of Tuscany. Naples and Sicily were bestowed upon the infant Don Carlos, with the title of king ; and a certain share of the spoils of the empire were to reward the king of Sardinia. France resigned, however, all her transrhenane conquests ; and the duchies of Parma and Placentia were taken from Spain, to whom they had been assigned by former treaties, and given to the emperor, as some slight compensation for the much more important territories of Naples and Sicily. Augustus, elector of Saxony, was recognised king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania ; and the hand of an archduchess was promised to the young duke of Lorraine, for the purpose of both giving him dignity in his new dominions, and again creating a link between Tuscany and the empire.

The young duke joyfully acquiesced ; but the kings of Spain and Sardinia, though they certainly obtained considerable and important territories, were not contented with their share of the prey,— the one regretting Parma and Placentia, and the other coveting the Milanese. The emperor, though the greatest loser, was obliged to be satisfied with seeing a part of his territories restored, and with the solemn recognition, by the powers of Europe, of the gross and scandalous piece of injustice which he had committed in forcing a monarch upon the Poles, and virtually depriving them of their long-cherished right of election. The whole of these events, however,— the transfer of Lorraine from prince to prince, the passing of Parma and Placentia under three dynasties within a very few years, the dismemberment of Sicily and Naples from the empire, and the want of all consideration shown to the Polish election,— serve to show that there was not a diplomatist at that time in Europe who had the slightest idea that the people had any thing to do whatsoever with the government under which they were doomed to live.

Thus, however, ended the short war of 1733, and

the government of Fleury at once resumed its pacific character. The peace which succeeded was preserved by the French minister till the year 1741, when he was again forced, at the close of a long life, to see his best views for the welfare and prosperity of France once more interrupted. On this occasion, individual offences offered to England put the spark to a mine which had been long dug beneath the tranquillity of Europe. The jealousy which Spain entertained of any of the maritime powers taking a share in the commerce of South America, had been a source of great irritation between Great Britain and that country; and in the present instance, the captain of a merchant vessel, named Jenkins, had been attacked within the limits of the coasts of Spanish America by the vessels of that government, and although no contraband commodity was found in his ship, various acts of violence were committed, the ears and the nose of Jenkins himself were mutilated, and in this state he returned to England to demand retribution against Spain. The report of what had occurred excited the popular indignation in the highest degree; and nothing was heard of from all parts of the country but demands that the government should take measures to do away for ever the exclusive privileges which Spain claimed in regard to the sea on the coast of South America.

Various transactions ensued in consequence, which only served to produce fresh subjects of discord; and Spain, now closely allied with France, neglected such satisfaction to England as might have turned away the storm. Fleury, however, endeavoured, if possible, to bring about, by negotiation, a pacific result; and for that purpose, an ambassador was sent over to London to offer the mediation of France in restoring a good understanding between the courts of St. James's and Madrid. The Spaniards accused the government of England of having violated the convention of the 14th of January, 1739, by which it was stipulated that an English squadron, sent to protect the British commerce,

was to be withdrawn from the coasts of Spain, and that the king of Spain was to pay eighty-five thousand pounds sterling, as an indemnity for the injuries inflicted by his cruisers upon various British merchants. The truth, however, would seem to be, that neither party fulfilled its engagements, and the affair of Jenkins only came to give point to all the angry feelings of the two countries.

Under these circumstances the mediation of France was rejected; although it must have been very evident to the English government, from the state of the relations between France and Spain, and the marriage which took place between the infant Don Philip and a French princess in the month of August of that year, that Louis XV., with a prosperous treasury and recruited forces, would take part in favour of Spain during the ensuing war. The English merchants were eager for hostilities, and pressed eagerly for permission to use reprisals against the ships of Spain. Letters of mark were accordingly issued and permission granted, and on the 30th of October *, war was formally declared between England and Spain.

Fleury would still willingly have avoided taking any active share in the hostilities which now commenced, and lingered long ere he suffered himself to be hurried into the scene of contention which presented itself. At the same time he diligently laboured to cement the alliances between France and the neighbouring countries, in order that, when at length forced to contend with England, Louis XV. might be secured on all sides against the attack of other enemies. He had already entered into a treaty with the emperor guaranteeing the support of France to the pragmatic sanction by which the Austrian dominions were entailed upon the female heirs of the emperor. He now entered into a commercial treaty with Holland; and thus, insuring friendship to France on the part of two countries, who might have given her much annoyance in any struggle with England, he waited, prepared

* By some accounts I find that war was declared on the 23d of October

for the moment when Spain should actually force him into the contest. Such was the state of things, when, on the 20th of October, 1740, the sudden and unexpected death of the emperor Charles VI., the claims of his daughter, the grand duchess of Tuscany, to his territories, the opposition of several other princes, and the violent aggressions of the king of Prussia upon Sicilia, brought new elements of discord into the political combination of Europe, and soon induced a general war, in which France was compelled to take part.

As the war between England and Spain was carried on principally at sea, the share which France took therein was on the same element. The marquis d'Antin was sent with a squadron to America, and some unimportant collisions took place between the marine of France and England, when, on one occasion, the advantage was in favour of France. About the same time, however, admiral Vernon swept the coasts of South America with the English fleet, took Porto Bello, and nearly ruined the commerce of Spain. Bocachica, one of the strongest fortresses attached to Cartagena, was also taken by Vernon, and every thing promised complete success to the English efforts for the purpose of rendering free the navigation of the southern seas. The commerce of England, however, suffered severely; an immense number of our merchant vessels were taken by Spanish cruisers; and the usual effect of war was felt in the loss and detriment to both parties.

Still Fleury endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid any more active measures; but, day by day, the events in Germany and Italy hurried France more deeply into hostilities, and, on the 17th of August, 1741, notwithstanding the guarantee of the pragmatic sanction given by Fleury himself, an army of forty thousand men was ordered to march from France to support the elector of Bavaria in his opposition to the empress queen of Hungary. The events which followed these steps need not be recapitulated here. It is sufficient to say that, during the rest of the life of Fleury, the war

was conducted with the same vigour and activity which had distinguished the war of 1733. If the same important results were not obtained, the blame could not be attached to the minister, although the extreme period of old age at which he had arrived might naturally be supposed to have produced inactivity both of mind and body. Such, however, was not the case, and he retained all his faculties nearly to the last moment of his existence. Towards the close of 1742, however, as he entered his ninetieth year, his corporeal powers began to give way; and, feeling the approach of death, he retired to Issy, where life gradually went out like an expiring fire on the 29th of January, 1743, when he had reached the great age of eighty-nine years, seven months, and six days.

We can scarcely admit that any difference of opinion really exists in regard to the principal points in the character of Fleury, for all those who accuse him of ambitious purposes at one moment, contradict themselves the next, and show, by admitting the extraordinary spirit of moderation which ruled his whole actions through life, that they themselves are incapable of conceiving the character of a person whose only ambition was to do good. He himself had, at a period when his own fate was by no means certain, renounced his right of succession to the barony de Perigny, making it over to his nephew; and for this nephew he obtained, at an after period, some moderate promotion at the court of France. Even the love of his family, so powerful with many men, had not the effect of inducing Fleury to snatch at that worldly honour and wealth for his relations, which he neglected and despised himself. At his death, the whole property that he left was scarcely that of a respectable citizen; and Duclos informs us that all he had amassed in the course of twenty-eight years of favour would not have paid half the expenses of the mausoleum which his grateful pupil erected to his memory. The only dignity to which he seems really ever to have aspired, was that of cardinal, without which it would have been difficult for him to have exercised the duties of that

office which was forced upon him rather than taken. But, indeed, no one can read the details of his life and of his ministry, without perceiving that moderation, that rare and most inestimable virtue, was decidedly his; and though Richelieu and Mazarin might show more talent, and genius of a higher order, in struggling with the difficulties and dangers and constant opposition to which they were exposed, it is certain that France had never a more successful minister than Fleury, and never enjoyed more happiness and internal prosperity under the administration of any one than it did under his.

Another trait in the character of Fleury, which ought not to be passed over, is, that with the strict economy which distinguished his government, he united liberality and extent of views. A French author, in speaking of that economy, has said, "It was minute, but not sordid; and his liberality extended nobly to the encouragement of literature, science, and the arts. By him, and at a very great expense, were sent forth astronomers, both to the North Seas and to South America, in order to measure exactly a degree of the meridian, and to determine the real form of the earth. He applied himself strenuously also to improve and enlarge the Bibliotheque du Roi; purchased the buildings required for the reception of that magnificent collection; and ameliorated and extended the plan which had been laid down for the edifice. He also first caused the annual exhibition of works of art, by the pupils of the French academy; and, in fact, his efforts for the diffusion of knowledge of various kinds, were such as Colbert himself might have owned with pride. Fond of the polite arts himself, it was natural that he should encourage them, and he regarded as one of his proudest distinctions, that of belonging to the three principal academies of France.

In person, Fleury was handsome, and retained a dignified and pleasant appearance to the last. He was eloquent, fluent, and accurate in his discourses; wrote his own language and several others well; and was pe-

culiarly happy in enlivening his conversation by wit, that wounded no one, and anecdotes that amused but could not injure. He was gentle and affable in private life, and accessible and unostentatious as a minister: but he resisted that temptation to luxury and selfish enjoyment, which is often found in a fondness for society; and he could always refuse a courtier who applied for that which he did not deserve, without making an enemy or wounding a friend.

“The ministry of a just man,” says a writer, nearly contemporary, “had proved to France an age of gold. Nevertheless, as men love nothing but extraordinary things, it will not be so celebrated in history as that of a Richelieu, or of a Mazarin. But if the people had the choice of those appointed to govern them, they would prefer, without doubt, the talents, should they be but moderate, of a wise and virtuous man, such as cardinal Fleury, to the unquiet and dangerous superiority of the two others.”

PHILIP LOUIS, COUNT ZINZENDORF.

BORN 1671, DIED 1742.

WE have already dwelt so fully, in the lives of Dubois and Fleury, on the opening of the 18th century, that in the biography of Philip Louis, count Zinzendorf, there is little now to be said in regard to the principal political events with which he mingled ; without indeed entering into those minute historical particulars which we are precluded from touching upon by the nature of this work. His private life, however, offers some curious details, which may not be uninteresting, and to these we shall principally direct our attention, without failing to notice as we proceed the chief scenes in which he appeared, at a time when, as Frederic II. observed, there was a great epoch of intrigue amongst the Austrian ministers.

Like Fleury, Dubois, Alberoni, and Ripperda, Zinzendorf, at his outset in life, had but little prospect of attaining the high rank and power which he afterwards reached. He was, indeed, of a family of high nobility, and son of a president of the imperial court of Vienna, by the daughter of a princely house ; but his father was branded, we are informed, with disgrace, on account of some act of corruption or peculation ; and Zinzendorf, who was a second son, and born on the 26th of December, 1671, was dedicated, from the cradle, to the profession of an ecclesiastic. Seeing no other road open before him, he applied himself diligently to study, but pushed his efforts in pursuit of knowledge into very different roads from those usually pursued by Austrian churchmen in that day. History, the laws of the empire, and the relations of various countries to each other, were openly pursued by him as the principal objects of

study, and he had already, in his extreme youth, so much distinguished himself, that many eyes were fixed on him as an aspirant to clerical dignities of great promise, when suddenly the death of his elder brother, who was killed in a duel, opened the way for him at once to the true sphere of his genius.

The attention of the emperor had been already called to the young count, and so much did he gain upon the monarch's confidence, that as early as the year 1694 he was entrusted with a mission to the court of Bavaria. The elector of Bavaria, closely connected with the royal family of France, and inclined to support the cause of that family, notwithstanding all the ties that bound him to the emperor, had been with the greatest difficulty retained in alliance with the house of Austria; and a thousand intrigues were necessary from day to day to keep him from abandoning the part he had been compelled rather than induced to espouse, and from going over to the enemy. Early in the war, which was terminated by the peace of Ryswick, Villars had been sent from France, for the purpose of winning the elector, and in the year of which we now speak Zinzendorf was despatched to his court, in order to keep up by all means the influence of the house of Austria. For a time the cabinet of Vienna was completely successful, and the duke, notwithstanding his own inclinations and the pressing entreaties of France, remained attached to the service of the empire till the commencement of the war of the succession.

Whatever share Zinzendorf took in the negotiations with Bavaria, and also with Baden, which state he afterwards visited, they were so successful, that more important missions were speedily conferred upon him. He was raised to the rank of aulic councillor, and on the signature of the peace of Ryswick was sent as ambassador extraordinary to the court of France. Here he applied himself steadfastly to cultivate the regard of the dauphin, and succeeded in gaining an intimate acquaintance with that prince. He became one of those who frequently followed him in the hunting parties to

which so much time was devoted, and was occasionally honoured by being chosen to dine with the prince after the sport was concluded. His intimacy with the dauphin, however, was destined to produce no results of the nature which he probably expected. Louis XIV. outlived his son ; but before the death of the dauphin, Zinzendorf had been recalled from the court of France, in consequence of the breaking out of the war of the succession.

What Louis might have attempted had not the dying king of Spain appointed by his will the young duke of Anjou (the grandson of the French monarch) to succeed to his vacant throne, we need not inquire here ; but from the moment that the succession to the throne of Spain, as regulated by that will, was generally made known, a new war was seen to be inevitable, and Austria and France, as usual, placed themselves at the opposite sides of the lists as adversaries to each other. The will of the king of Spain was, of course, made known to Louis as speedily as possible, and after short deliberation, the French monarch accepted its conditions, and prepared to carry it into execution. Before Zinzendorf was aware of the existence of such a document, Louis had received the will, had announced it to the duke of Anjou, and had introduced both the Spanish ambassador and his principal courtiers to the new king of Spain.

While these proceedings were taking place above, it so happened that the Austrian envoy was waiting for the master of the ceremonies below, having demanded an audience of Louis, to communicate the birth of a prince in the imperial family. The monarch received him at length with all urbanity ; and it was not till he had obtained his audience and was departing, that Zinzendorf learned that events so subversive of his monarch's views had just been transacted in the very same palace with himself.

Although it would appear that the Austrian minister had failed to secure good intelligence, at a moment when the most speedy and certain information was absolutely

necessary to the imperial court, yet we do not find that he lost favour with the emperor in consequence ; and on his return to Vienna he was admitted to the privy council. It would seem that he now attached himself strongly to the king of the Romans, afterwards Joseph I. ; and although that prince was in some degree aware of his faults, yet Zinzendorf was completely successful in his endeavour to gain his confidence and esteem, and preserved them through life. It is but justice to say, however, that the Austrian minister, though certainly selfish and intriguing, seems to have entertained a sincere affection for his royal master.

Scarcely had the war commenced, when the archbishop of Cologne, as prince of Liege, received a French garrison in the latter strong city, trusting for defence to the power of France. In the year 1702, however, Liege itself was besieged by the enemies of France, and the king of the Romans also laid siege to Landau. Melac, the governor of the last named place, made a vigorous resistance, and defended the town for at least a month after it was generally expected that it would have surrendered : but his courage and determination were in vain. No efforts of sufficient vigour were made on the part of France to raise the siege, or at least none were made with sufficient promptitude ; and when Villars, with a large detachment, joined Catinat, in order to relieve the place, there no longer existed a possibility of effecting that object. The conduct of Melac, however, who defended the fortress, gained him the greatest honour, even with the enemy, and the king of the Romans invited him to his table, and in person did the honours of his camp.

Liege fell soon after ; and Zinzendorf was immediately sent thither, to change the government of the town ; it having been declared by the emperor forfeited by the archbishop of Cologne. The Austrian statesman there assembled the states of the principality, installed the new governor, and performed all the ceremonial acts consequent upon the degradation of the

former prince. His conduct gave the greatest satisfaction to the king of the Romans, and the count became his principal adviser and frequent companion. He followed his master to the camp on almost all occasions, and his influence had now reached that point at which minor courtiers sought to attach themselves to the favourite who was obviously rising. There is reason to believe, however, that Zinzendorf was haughty and repellent in his manners to those below him ; but though such pride is often the means of an ambitious man's fall when he has risen, it is less frequently an impediment in the way of rising. The first notion which other people obtain of a man's value is, that which he puts upon himself ; and it requires time and close examination to discover how far the estimate is faulty. Zinzendorf was by no means likely to suffer from not appreciating fully his own talents ; but still those talents must have been considerable, if we may judge by the continued confidence which Joseph I., a prince of no mean abilities, reposed in him through life.

On the accession of that prince to the imperial crown, in May, 1705, new honours and offices were showered upon Zinzendorf, who was almost immediately created grand chancellor of the court of Vienna, and protector of the imperial academy. The victories of Eugene, in 1706, gave the emperor the most flattering hopes of being able, by one more campaign, to reduce the power of France to the lowest ebb, and to conclude the war at once. Money, however, was wanting, the imperial treasury was nearly empty, and no resource remained but to raise a large loan ; which, however, was then most difficult to do, upon any security which the house of Austria could give. It would appear that, under these circumstances, Zinzendorf proposed to his sovereign to induce the Dutch, who were engaged in the same struggle with himself, and had also much at stake, to become the guarantees of the projected loan, which was to be employed so much to the advantage of all parties.

In order to persuade the states to consent, Zinzen-

dorf himself set out for Holland, and opened his negotiation with some prospect of success. But no effort is more difficult and more frequently unsuccessful than to wring gold from a money-loving people by a prospect of remote advantage. The king of Sweden had by this time entered Saxony ; the Dutch feared to endanger their wealth by becoming guarantees of the imperial loan, and the endeavours of Zinzendorf were unsuccessful, in that respect at least. Whether under the more ostensible object of the loan there was not concealed some other purpose, both with the states and with the great duke of Marlborough, is not clear ; but I am led to imagine that there really was such a view in the mission of Zinzendorf, as the Austrian statesman had no sooner concluded his negotiations with the states than he hastened to visit the English general, and courted him with the most flattering homage.* Marlborough received him with the calm and prudent civility, which he displayed on all occasions, and Zinzendorf, after a short visit, returned to Vienna, apparently well satisfied with the result of his efforts, though in some respects he had not been successful.

His imperial master seems to have been fully contented with his conduct also ; and the journey he had taken, and the negotiations in which he had laboured, were recompensed by the order of the golden fleece, and by the gift of a considerable estate. Notwithstanding the high esteem in which Zinzendorf was held by his master, and the honours showered upon him, he by no means as yet ruled the imperial council ; as will be seen by the letter to the duke of Marlborough, which I have added to this notice. Shortly after his return from the Low Countries he was sent upon an embassy to Poland, for the purpose of bringing over the newly-

* The French biographers of Zinzendorf place this visit in January, 1707, which must be inaccurate. The only time that it could have taken place at all in, 1707, was between the 17th of April and the 19th, as on the first of those days Marlborough arrived at the Hague, and on the last set out for Saxony, whence he did not return till Zinzendorf had gone back to Vienna.

elected monarch of that country to the party of the archduke Charles. Stanislaus, however, refused to recognise the archduke as king of Spain, and Zinzendorf returned to Vienna disappointed in the chief object of his mission. He had, however, served the archduke Charles with zeal and skill, if not with good fortune; and it has been generally a great and noble trait in the character of princes of the house of Austria that they have not made mere want of success the test either of abilities or zeal.

Charles felt towards Zinzendorf that gratitude and regard which the statesman's efforts in his favour deserved, and an opportunity was not long wanting of giving public proof of such sentiments. In the middle of the year 1711, just at the time when a weak and sullen princess, disgusted with the insolence of a talented favourite, changed the councils in which she had prospered, and snatched the sword from a hand which had never used it but to gain for her reign immortal glory, the emperor Joseph died very unexpectedly, and left his Austrian dominions to his brother, while the imperial crown remained vacant. The chance of any other candidate in a contest for the empire would, indeed, have been small, but nevertheless the situation of the house of Austria was extremely critical.

Charles, the archduke, was absent, fighting for a distant crown; a small body of the electors were vehemently opposed to him, and some of the others could be hardly looked upon as friendly; while the powerful aid of England, which had ensured success to his arms in every quarter but in Spain, was now evidently about to be withdrawn. The Tories had obtained power, and with the virulent wilfulness of party were prepared to reverse all the measures of their predecessors. It is not impossible that if Louis XIV. had been still in the fiery vigour of his youth, he would have raised up a new candidate for the empire, and striven to divide the electors in favour of the duke of Bavaria; but the prudent measures of the empress in favour of her relative, seconded or rather directed by the wisdom of Eugene and Zinzendorf, ensured the succession

of Charles to the imperial crown, as well as to the hereditary possessions of his house, and he was elected emperor, with all voices in his favour except those of the duke of Bavaria and the archbishop of Cologne, who were excluded.

The new emperor had left Spain, where he had been carrying on the war before his election took place, and it was at Milan that he received tidings of that event. He immediately hurried on to accept the imperial crown, which he received at Frankfort in December ; and his gratitude for Zinzendorf's services and esteem for his abilities was immediately testified, not only by his confirming him in the enjoyment of all offices and dignities which he had held under the late emperor, but also by employing him immediately in the most important negotiation of the age. The defection of England from the grand alliance was now complete ; the accession of Charles to the empire afforded a favourable excuse ; and though he still urged that his having been acknowledged by Great Britain as king of Spain bound that nation to consider him as such, notwithstanding his recent elevation ; the excuse came seasonably to cover measures already determined on by the new ministry of Anne.

The emperor, however, still remained firm, but it was necessary for him to send a minister to Utrecht, in order to watch the proceedings of the plenipotentiaries there assembled, to treat for peace, if not absolutely to take part in the negotiation. Zinzendorf was selected for this delicate employ, and acted with as much skill and vigour as could be displayed under the difficult circumstances in which he was placed. At the moment that the conferences began, Zinzendorf was surrounded either by declared opponents, or what is worse, false friends. Louis treated them with as much art as decision, and the triumph of French diplomacy was never more complete. But while he appeared as the open adversary of the emperor, England came there as a secret enemy ; and Holland, who had in the pre-

ceding year excluded Zinzendorf from her conferences with France, now presented herself as a timid friend, frightened by the defection of Great Britain.

Zinzendorf, under these circumstances, received all the proposals put forth by France and England merely as suggestions, while his master strove eagerly to continue, with the support of Holland alone, the war which had commenced with numerous allies. The Dutch, however, pressed by the Austrian minister for the subsidies they were bound to furnish, grew weary of hostilities; the posts of Denain were forced by Villars with great loss to Holland, and Austria was at length abandoned by that country. One more campaign proved to the emperor that he was not capable of coping with France without allies, and conferences were established at Radstadt between the two countries. On this occasion, however, Eugene conducted the proceedings instead of Zinzendorf, and there can be little doubt that considerable jealousy of that great general's influence as a statesman disturbed the repose of the chancellor.

In the middle of the year 1722, however, Zinzendorf was again appointed to represent the house of Austria at the congress of Cambrai, and appeared there in 1724; but it would seem that his conduct here gave some cause of complaint to the emperor, which did not, indeed, affect his fortunes, but which might have done so with a more severe and exacting master.

"The ragouts of Zinzendorf," the emperor said, according to the report of the king of Prussia, "the ragouts of Zinzendorf get him into difficult situations;" and indeed his epicurism forms a peculiar feature in his character too prominent not to be particularly noticed. His house in Vienna was remarkable for its splendour and good taste, but more remarkable still as the grand school of the culinary art in the Austrian metropolis. The cooks of Zinzendorf are said to have been almost as numerous as the countries in Europe, in order to en-

sure that every exotic luxury which he imported, and every foreign dish that he favoured, should have the advantage of a foreign hand in their preparation. Nor was it to Vienna alone that he confined his display of gastronomic refinement; to every foreign embassy, and to every grand congress which he went, he took with him a legion of cooks and assistants; and while he carefully studied every dish that he met with in other lands, and took care that each improvement should be carried to his native country by his culinary attachés, he astonished and enraptured the epicures of other nations with the richness and delicacy of his table. "His couriers," we are told, "crowded the roads, but were loaded more frequently with truffles than dispatches; every wine of every highly reputed vineyard in the world was to be found at his table, and no delicacy of any kind failed to appear there as soon as its season of perfection had arrived."

Frederic II. accuses him of indolence, or at least of inactivity; and it is certain that a great portion of that time which should have been devoted to the business of the state was given up to the consideration and enjoyment of the pleasures of the table. So curious a picture of Zinzendorf's morning employments, by an anonymous writer in the Annual Register for 1762, has been pointed out to me, that I cannot refrain from transcribing it here, without, of course, warranting its accuracy, and even feeling the necessity of adding, that all such anecdotes of celebrated men should be looked upon with great suspicion.

"On his public days," says the writer, "there was a half hour, and sometimes near a whole one, when he was altogether inaccessible; and with respect to his employment in those seasons, as is ever the case as to the privacies of prime ministers, there was a great variety of deep and different speculations. An inquisitive foreigner, however, resolved to be at the bottom, cost what it would; and by a gratification to one of his pages, which might have procured a greater

secret, he was let into this. In order to gratify his curiosity, he was placed in a closet, between the room where the count was, and the chamber of audience, where he had the satisfaction of beholding the following pleasant scene. The count, seated in his elbow chair, gave the signal of his being ready for the important business; when, preceded by a page, with a cloth on his arm and a drinking glass, one of his principal domestics appeared, who presented a silver salver, with many little pieces of bread elegantly disposed: he was immediately followed by the first cook, who, on another salver, had a number of small vessels, filled with so many different kinds of gravy. His excellency then tucking his napkin into his cravat, first washed and gargled his mouth, and having wiped it, dipped a piece of bread into each kind of sauce, and having tasted with much deliberation, rinsing his palate, to avoid confusion, after every piece, at length with inexpressible sagacity decided as to the destination of them all. These grand instruments of luxury, with their attendants, then were dismissed, and the long-expected minister, having fully discussed this interesting affair, found himself at liberty to discharge next the duties of his political function."

This picture may perhaps be overcharged, but there can be no doubt that it bore some resemblance as a portrait to the grand chancellor, and that his inattention to political affairs, on various occasions, was attributed by his imperial master himself to his fondness for the pleasures of the table. Two of the most important transactions, however, of Zinendorf's life occupied him about this time; and though the result of those transactions was not such as he probably expected it would be, yet there can be no doubt that in the course of them he showed great skill and judgment, and displayed those talents which had gained and preserved the confidence of the emperor. The first of these transactions which we shall notice, is the conception and arrangement of the famous pragmatic

sanction ; the execution of which ultimately plunged Europe into a long and disastrous war. We have no exact proof, indeed, with whom this famous act originated, but almost all historians have attributed it principally to Zinzendorf ; and there can be little doubt that he played a more active part in the business than any of the other ministers of the emperor.

On succeeding to the imperial crown, Charles was without male heirs, and a son which he afterwards had, died within a year of its birth. A thousand difficulties presented themselves in regard to the succession to the Austrian dominions in case of the emperor dying without male heirs. The crown of Hungary was considered by the Hungarians themselves as an elective crown, and there were various claimants upon various parts of his other territories, so that at his death, a scene of contention was likely to ensue, the thought of which caused him great anxiety. Zinzendorf, it is supposed, proposed to the monarch at an early period the project of settling the succession of the house of Austria during his life, of obtaining to the act which ensured that succession the consent of all the principal parties interested, and of rendering it as binding as any act of one generation can be upon another, by publishing it with the sanction of his council, and all the solemnities which attended the annunciation of an imperial rescript.

On the occasion of the coronation of his wife as queen of Hungary, which took place within a few years after his accession to the imperial throne, the emperor demanded of the states of that kingdom to recognise the succession in his family in the order of primogeniture ; and he settled in his council, that all his lands, principalities, states, and territories, of every kind and description, should pass, on his death, to his eldest son, should he leave male heirs, and in default of the male line, then to his daughters, according to seniority, without any partition or division whatsoever. Before this law could be published, however, a number of difficult negotiations were necessary, in order to obtain the renunciation of the emperor's

two nieces — the electoral princess of Saxony, and the duchess of Bavaria.

These negotiations were conducted by Zinzendorf with much skill and success, as well as all the other arrangements necessary for completing the law of succession, and of rendering it, as far as possible, binding upon all parties. At length, having been completely digested in the councils of the Austrian monarch, what is generally known now in Europe by the name of the pragmatic sanction was formally published. It is to be remarked, however, that though this is the most famous instrument of the kind, the pragmatic sanction has also a general meaning, — being very nearly, if not quite, synonymous with an imperial rescript. A pragmatic sanction is, I believe, considered by the laws of the empire as an answer given by the sovereign to the application of any particular body of men ; whereas a rescript is generally regarded as the answer to applications from an individual. By the pragmatic sanction of the emperor Charles VI., the whole of his hereditary dominions were, as we have said, settled upon his eldest daughter, the archduchess Maria Theresa ; the consent of the various states forming those hereditary dominions having been obtained, and the solemn sanction of an imperial diet confirming the law.

When that was done, however, there still remained other measures of security to be taken by the emperor, in order to guard the throne of his daughter from the cupidity of neighbouring powers, and from the ambitious movements of after-claimants who might spring up. In the year 1622, the negotiations of Zinzendorf were successful in obtaining the full recognition of the pragmatic sanction by Hungary and Transyl-

* The arrangement of the various preliminaries to the publication of the pragmatic sanction occupied many years, the act itself having been probably even drawn up as early as 1713, but not promulgated. There can be no doubt that the measure was then discussed by Charles and his advisers, and a plan of proceedings devised to meet the contingency of the emperor dying without male heirs. The formal acceptance and guarantee of the pragmatic sanction by the diet of the empire was not obtained till the 11th of January, 1732, and even then one or two protest were entered against the act of that diet.

vania ; and shortly after, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia, as well as the rest of the hereditary states, gave in their adherence to that famous law. But, in the mean time, Zinzendorf was carrying on eager intrigues with foreign countries for the purpose of obtaining their guarantee of the settlement of the succession as made by the emperor. The negotiations which took place were too long and intricate to admit of being noticed in this place, and besides are in themselves totally devoid of all interest. It is sufficient to say, that in almost all of these negotiations Zinzendorf was successful, and gained for the pragmatic sanction the full consent and guarantee of Great Britain, France, and Holland, which, if sincerely acted upon, would have been quite sufficient to ensure to Maria Theresa the peaceful enjoyment of the dominions which her father bequeathed.

The next celebrated transaction in which Zinzendorf was engaged, was the well-known negotiation between the courts of France and Spain, which ended in the famous treaty of Vienna. The wild and stupid ambition of the duke of Bourbon, the blindest and dullest minister that ever afflicted a nation, had severed the bonds of kindred existing between the Bourbon houses of France and Spain, and inflicted upon Philip V. an insult and an injury which could never be forgiven. The crown, however, which had once ruled one half the world, was now impotent to avenge itself upon France, though that country was not only divided in itself, but reduced to a lamentable state of financial difficulty ; and Philip V., in his indignation and despair, was driven to have recourse to the rival who had long struggled with him for the throne of Spain, and who had never ceased to entertain hopes of wresting from him some portion of his dominions.

There was at that time at the court of Madrid a Dutchman, of the name of Ripperda*, who had been employed in various offices in Holland and in Spain, and who had dazzled the weak mind of Philip with

* See foregoing Life of Eipperda.

vast plans for the extension and amelioration of his dominions. This man had long striven with numerous enemies at the Spanish court, but had found means to foil them all, and ultimately to obtain for himself the full confidence of the king and queen. At the same time, there can be little or no doubt that he kept up a correspondence with the house of Austria, and probably was one of the many paid agents which Zinzendorf undoubtedly maintained in secret at the court of the principal monarchs of Europe. At the very critical moment when Ripperda's rise or fall was to be determined, various causes of discontent arose between England, France, and Spain. Austria was also strongly opposed both to England and Holland, on the subject of the Ostend company ; and Ripperda, who was vehemently adverse to the English party in the Spanish cabinet, conceived the project of a close alliance between the courts of Madrid and Vienna. To persuade either party, however, to such an alliance, was a matter of no small difficulty, as feelings of personal rivalry were mingled with causes of political enmity.

The negotiations which took place have been involved in a great deal of mystery ; but it appears to me, that probably, in representing the affairs of Spain to Zinzendorf, Ripperda demanded whether a treaty might not be brought about by the marriage of one of the archduchesses to the prince of the Asturias ; that Zinzendorf had not altogether discouraged the idea ; and that Ripperda magnified any small hopes that lie was permitted to entertain into very strong assurances, when communicating the business to Philip V. Philip and his queen, even before the return of the infant from France, were dazzled with the idea of a union which promised to seat their son upon the imperial throne of Charles V., and reunite once more, in the person of a Spanish prince, all those sovereignties which had been held by the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella. Ripperda was consequently sent to Vienna, to treat with the imperial court ; but for fear of awakening, prematurely,

the suspicions of foreign powers, which might naturally have opposed a marriage calculated to overthrow the balance of power in Europe, the utmost secrecy was observed in regard to the mission of the Dutch statesman ; he travelled under a feigned name, lay concealed in a suburb of Vienna, and only conducted his negotiations with Zinzendorf at night.

The real state of the imperial court, however, at the period of the arrival of Ripperda in Vienna, was very different from that which he had represented it to Philip V. Instead of being well disposed to an alliance by marriage with the Bourbon family of Spain, almost every member of the imperial race, and almost all the Austrian ministers, were strongly and decidedly opposed to the proposal. The emperor had never forgiven Philip for excluding him from the Spanish throne ; the empress ~~sa~~ divisions, jealousies, and the renewal of a general war, in the arrangement suggested ; and Eugene, Zinzendorf, and the whole council, attached to a system which they had followed for many years in opposition to the court of Madrid, were not at all disposed to change that system at the suggestion of a wild and scheming adventurer ; while the archduchess Maria Theresa herself, beloved by her parents, and possessing considerable influence with them, shrunk from the idea of a marriage with the Spanish prince, in consequence, we are told, of a strong inclination to bestow her hand, and the vast possessions that accompanied it, upon the young duke of Lorraine.

Under these circumstances, Ripperda had, of course, every difficulty to contend with in his secret negotiations ; but he had a potent auxiliary, which he exercised with great success, in bringing over to his views every member of the imperial council except Eugene. That auxiliary was gold ; and the chancellor Zinzendorf, it would seem, was not less sensible of its eloquent voice than the rest of the ministers. It has even been insinuated that the emperor himself participated in the *presents* of Ripperda ; and there can be no

doubt that the enormous sum of 570,000 pistoles was distributed by the Spanish envoy in less than three months.

For a considerable length of time, Ripperda's transactions at Vienna remained involved in the deepest mystery. A stranger was seen visiting Zinzendorf every night; and it became whispered that some person of vast importance lay concealed in the suburb. During these secret visits, the opposition of Zinzendorf to an alliance with Spain gradually melted away, under the influence, there can be no doubt, of corruption in some degree; but equally, in all probability, under the increasing demands of the maritime powers, and their fierce opposition to the company of Ostend. There can be as little doubt, from the whole accounts that are given, that Zinzendorf, clearly comprehending the character of Ripperda, regarded many of his wild and irrational views with cool contempt, and amused him as a child, or played with him as a tool, till his own purposes were to be answered by following the suggestions of the Spanish envoy. There were, indeed, at the time, wild and floating rumours that the imperial chancellor treated the Spanish plenipotentiary with very slight ceremony,—leaving him in an antechamber, employed in frivolous amusements, while he himself, together with the other ministers of the empire, drew up the project of the famous treaty which was signed on the 30th of April, 1725.

By that treaty Ripperda gained less than might have been expected for Spain; and his excuse was that Philip V., enraged beyond all measure at the insult offered to him by the fact of his daughter being sent back from France, had commanded him to conclude the treaty with the emperor at any cost and on any conditions, in order to obtain the means of avenging himself on the duke of Bourbon. It was not till after the infanta had returned to Spain, that Zinzendorf's mysterious visiter, who had hitherto been only known by the name of *the man in black*, came forth from

his concealment, with all the dignity of an ambassador, and treated openly with the imperial court. Nevertheless it is evident, that throughout—during the private as well as during the public negotiations—Zinzendorf led on the Spanish envoy from concession to concession, till he could expect and obtain no more. During a part of the negotiations, indeed, the chancellor was absent from Vienna; but the system which he adopted was pursued through the whole affair; and without any positive engagement, which might have been inconvenient at an after-time, the Austrian ministers gave Spain reason to believe that the hand of an archduchess would ultimately be bestowed upon the infant Don Carlos.

Resistance to the exactions of France, and to the greedy jealousy of the maritime powers, was agreed upon between the courts of Vienna and Madrid; but this determination was set forth in secret articles of the treaty, the particulars of which have never been distinctly cleared up. This opposition to France and the maritime states coincided well with the views both of the Austrian and Spanish ministers, and may be considered as having formed one grand chapter or division of the treaty of Vienna, if not a separate treaty itself, in which Rupperda certainly obtained one of his great objects. In another grand division or clause of the treaty, he also obtained what may be considered as important advantages for Spain. The articles set forth by the quadruple alliance, in relation to the various partitions of the Spanish monarchy, were recognised by both sovereigns; and the succession of the Bourbon dynasty in Spain was guaranteed by the emperor; while Philip, on the other hand, guaranteed the succession of the female line of the house of Austria, as declared in the pragmatic sanction.

But the most important clause of the whole treaty or treaties, was that which secured to the empire extraordinary commercial advantages. The king of Spain gave his full support to the company of Ostend; great advantages

were granted to the subjects of the emperor, in trading with Spain, both in Europe and America; and privileges, immunities, and favours were stipulated for the merchants of the empire and the Hans towns, which might well have purchased some extraordinary concessions in return. Thus it is evident, that though all the advantages were not on the side of the emperor, he gave by no means as much as he gained; and Ripperda felt that it was so, and that Zinzendorf, by seizing upon favourable circumstances, had granted terms less desirable than Spain might have obtained through the means of slower, calmer, and less eager negotiation.

Ripperda, however, did not meet Zinzendorf on equal terms. The cool habitual diplomatist, with no fear for the duration of his own power, and running no contingent personal risk in case of failure, applied himself solely to gain as much for the empire as possible, and to grant as little as possible in return; while Ripperda, eager himself, and urged on by an eager king and an impetuous queen, had also to remember, throughout the whole negotiation, that his own rise or fall, his fortune or adversity for ever, depended upon his obtaining, speedily, something that might dazzle the eyes, if it did not altogether fulfil the wishes, of his sovereigns.

To ensure the calm and quiet results of the treaty determined upon, Zinzendorf did not at all scruple to give, by word of mouth, the most solemn assurances that the emperor would co-operate in recovering Gibraltar and Minorca for Spain, would aid Philip by arms to take vengeance upon France, and would grant one of his daughters as the bride of the infant *Don Carlos*. Some persons have supposed that several of these particulars were comprised in the secret articles of the treaty. They may have been so; but I have considerable doubts of the fact, and no doubt whatsoever that the promise of the archduchess's hand was merely verbal, even supposing that Ripperda himself did not add considerably to the words in which that promise was conveyed. The treaties, however, were signed on the 30th of

April and 1st of May, and the chevalier du Bourg assures us that Ripperda was not even present when the articles were drawn up, giving us to suppose, that while Zinzendorf arranged the whole affair, Ripperda remained at his own house superintending the dignified labour of carding mattresses. We must remember that Du Bourg was at Vienna at the time; but, notwithstanding all Zinzendorf's calm skill, and the presumptuous thoughtlessness of Ripperda, I should be inclined to give very little credit to an anecdote which so far outrages probability.

Not long after the signature of these treaties, Ripperda quitted Vienna to carry tidings of his own success to Madrid; but even that success, trifling as it was, had been bought by promises which he could not fulfil. The materials for the formation of fine armies were ready in the empire, but money was wanting to put them in motion; and Zinzendorf, strongly suspecting that, notwithstanding the lavish profusion with which Ripperda had been enabled to pursue the work of corruption at Vienna, the court of Madrid would find it difficult or unpleasant to bear a full share in the expenses of the war, had bound Ripperda by solemn engagements to furnish subsidies to a large amount, to enable the emperor to bring his forces into the field. Before the emperor committed himself any further in the cause of Spain, Zinzendorf judged it expedient to take measures, either for obtaining the promised subsidies at once, or for verifying the suspicions which he undoubtedly entertained of Ripperda's capability of fulfilling his engagements. In order to bring the matter to issue, he despatched count Königseg, a deep-seeing and determined negotiator of his own school, to the court of Madrid; but it was soon found that the promised subsidies could not be afforded at once, delays and excuses supervened, and the emperor's ministers learned in time that the prospects held out by the Spanish ambassador were delusive.

No haste, therefore, was shown to bestow one of

the archduchesses upon Don Carlos, and no rapid measures were taken to carry the empire into a war in which there was a great probability of being left unaided. Long and intricate negotiations, indeed, were carried on for the purpose of gaining allies for the emperor amongst the northern powers and the minor states of Germany; but in these transactions, as in many other of his diplomatic efforts, Zinzendorf was unsuccessful,—being opposed in most cases by the more skilful negotiator, self-interest. A successful effort was made in Spain, however, to overthrow the power of Ripperda, and the influence of the imperial court was for a considerable time paramount at Madrid; but still the emperor received no supplies, the French and English threatened his dominions, Sweden joined his enemies, and having fortunately not committed himself too far to retract, he sought an opportunity of averting the storm which the wild genius of Ripperda had conjured up.

Spain was left by Zinzendorf and the rest of the imperial advisers to pursue her schemes against England and France if she thought fit, and various fortunate circumstances presented an opportunity of employing the mediation of France in the restoration of tranquillity. The duke of Bourbon had been now removed from the French ministry, and Fleury, bishop of Fréjus, had succeeded him. The whole of the prelate's scheme of government was known to be pacific; and it was both necessary to Fleury to obtain the hat of a cardinal in order to give dignity to his position in the French ministry, and desirable that he should obtain it before the next general promotion, as his advanced age rendered the duration of his reign improbable. It was well known that the pope would not confer upon him the purple before the regular promotion, if that favour were opposed by the courts of Madrid and Vienna; and while the consent of the king of Spain, who rejoiced in the overthrow of the duke of Bourbon, was easily obtained, the young duke of Richelieu, the French

ambassador at Vienna, was employed to gain the good will of the imperial chancellor. Zinzendorf was on all occasions willing to serve those who might on after occasions serve him, and the consent of the emperor was at once given to the elevation of the French minister.

We now come to speak of a curious anecdote regarding some events which occurred, at this very period, to disturb the domestic life of Zinzendorf, and shall give our account thereof very nearly in the words of Duclos.

During the time that Ripperda was negotiating at the court of Vienna, the young duke of Richelieu, famous for his duels and his débaucheries, was sent by the duke of Bourbon to cope with the boastful Dutch statesman. Richelieu soon formed an intimacy with various persons of distinction at the court of Vienna, and amongst others with Philip Louis, second son of the chancellor, educated for the church of Rome, and already, at the age of twenty-six, invested with the dignity of bishop of Raab in Hungary. The young prelate had passed a considerable period in Rome, and there is some reason to believe that his morality, at this time, was not of the strictest kind. His father, however, had obtained for him the nomination of Augustus, king of Poland, to the rank of cardinal, and the promotion of the crowns was now at hand. The nomination had been by no means easy to obtain, and it would seem certain that the influence of England was employed to induce the catholic king of Poland to nominate the son of the imperial minister to the Roman purple.

Duclos, indeed, declares that Zinzendorf bought for his son the nomination, which the king of Poland had given to a person of the name of Strickland, whose character would not bear that keen investigation which the candidates for admission to the conclave take care to exercise upon each other, and who was consequently very well pleased to make money by disposing of a

title to the cardinalate, which, in his own person, would have proved useless ; but it would seem that the influence of the king of England himself was employed to obtain the nomination for the abbé Zinzendorf. The facilities which his father possessed, as chancellor of the empire and minister for foreign affairs, enabled him easily to arrange the transfer of the nomination, and he rested content with the prospect of seeing his son, for whom he had already obtained various favours from his imperial master, raised to the highest dignity of the Roman church.

Such was the state of affairs, when an unfortunate event had nearly blasted all these fair prospects. The abbé Zinzendorf became, as we have said, intimate with the young duke of Richelieu, who was notorious for his impudent and unscrupulous debaucheries, for a ferocious and blood-thirsty disposition, and for daring impiety. There can be very little doubt, according to the account of Lemontey, that he had been sent to Vienna for the purpose of quarrelling with Ripperda, and of either killing him in a duel, or driving him from that city. Before he went, he received letters of respite from the king, to suspend for a certain period the claims of his creditors ; and thus, to use the words of the author we have cited, “he who was sent as a bravo, set out as a bankrupt.” Such companionship could not, of course, be very beneficial to the morals of the bishop of Raab, and it is probable that his own licentiousness at that period did not require any further instruction, though he afterwards obtained a high character in the church. To these two associates was added count Westerloo, captain of the halberdiers of the emperor, equally wild, thoughtless, and dissolute as themselves.

For a certain time their pursuits were confined to the ordinary objects of licentious pleasure ; but, with the capricious whimsicality which follows and scourges excess, they were at length tempted to seek some newer and more daring sort of amusement. Open-

ing a communication with one of those impostors, who still, in that age, pretended to power over the beings of another world, and skill in an art against which, however imaginary, a thousand decrees of the Romish church had been levelled at various times, Richelieu and Zinzendorf, it would appear, determined to induce this magician to exercise the power he boasted of, and to raise the spirit of evil in their presence.

This was certainly going a great length for a Romish ~~poelite~~, both in folly and in wickedness ; but the folly was increased by the three noblemen suffering themselves to be persuaded that, in consideration of a certain sum given to him, this magician, who pretended to be an Armenian, could compel Satan to grant to each of them the thing that they desired the most. They must have thought him a very poor devil, indeed, to submit to the dictation of a man who was glad to obtain a few pieces of gold by exhibiting him to the curious ; but the most glaring absurdities never yet stopped any one in the career of superstition. Richelieu, Zinzendorf, and Westerloo were assuredly persuaded, to a certain extent ; and they appointed a time and place for the evocation of Satan ; Richelieu demanding, we are told, as the object of his desires, the key of the heart of princes, pretending that he already possessed that of the heart of women.

The time appointed was of course at night, and the place a quarry in the neighbourhood of Vienna. There the three young noblemen and the pretended magician met, and to a certain point the result was such as might have been expected. The magician proceeded to his incantations, and attempted to deceive them, and they discovered his artifices and his incapacity : but this farce was to be followed by a tragedy. On the following morning, some workmen, going to their daily labours, were drawn to the quarry by piteous groans, and found a man dressed in the Armenian costume, drenched in his blood, and dying of various wounds he had received. The workmen immediately

gave information to the police, who speedily discovered particulars which implicated in a terrible degree the abbé Zinzendorf. Such a thing as public justice was little known in Europe at that time, in cases where the parties interested were connected with those in power ; and the officers of police, before they took any further steps, immediately laid the whole before the chancellor.

Count Zinzendorf was neither a Roman father nor a Roman citizen, and he immediately employed every means to prevent the particulars of the affair from transpiring. The unhappy victim of the disappointed credulity of the three dupes was little more heard of in Vienna. The imperial chancellor engaged Fleury not only to overlook the conduct of the duke de Richelieu, but to send him the insignia of the Holy Ghost, and to use his utmost efforts to support the representations of the abbé Zinzendorf at Rome. In regard to his son, indeed, Zinzendorf had great right to entertain the most serious apprehensions ; for, of all crimes, that which seemed the most calculated to exclude a bishop for ever from the conclave, was sorcery followed by murder ; and there could scarcely be a doubt, that, if once the plain unvarnished tale reached the ears of the pope, the promotion of the bishop would inevitably be refused.

Under these circumstances, Zinzendorf determined to meet the matter at once by a partial statement of his son's crime ; and while he took especial care to remove, as far as possible, all proof of the real facts from the Austrian capital, he sent an account of the whole business, as he thought fit to represent it, to the pope, beseeching him to grant his son absolution for what he represented as a juvenile frolic. The pope, who had no means of acquiring more certain information, granted the absolution without difficulty ; and after having done so, could not, of course, make the crime that he had blotted out, an objection to the elevation of the bishop. Count Westerloo, it would seem, was made the scapegoat of the whole party ; and doubtless, both

in the case of Zinzenzorf and Richelieu, he was put forward as the real culprit. He was forced to throw up his command and fly from Vienna ; after which he took refuge in the Low Countries, and sank into obscurity. The son of the imperial minister, in the mean time, was elevated to the conclave, and, in 1730, powerfully aided therein to seat Clement XII. in the papal chair. The election of a pope favourable to the house of Austria was, at that period, a matter of no slight importance ; and the services of the cardinal, as well as the favour of his father, secured him honour and distinction from his imperial master : the affair of the magician was forgotten, and the prelate learned wisdom from experience.

The high consideration of his father remained unshaken at the court of the emperor ; and, indeed, as the health and activity of the famous prince Eugene declined with age, the influence of Zinzendorf had daily augmented, till the whole administration may be said to have been directed by himself. Some persons have supposed that a spirit of rivalry existed between Eugene and Zinzendorf, in some degree unfavourable to the tranquillity of the empire ; and that the great efforts made to render Trieste a place of commercial importance, in the Adriatic, and those to uphold the Ostend company in the north, were the effects of jealousy rather than of co-operation. I am inclined to believe, however, that such was not the case ; and that Eugene, though he undoubtedly estimated at a low rate the talents of the Austrian diplomatists, and might, perhaps, speak occasionally with contempt of Zinzendorf's epicurism and with reprobation of his occasional inactivity, appreciated the abilities which he certainly did possess, and did all that he could to render his designs successful. Zinzendorf, perhaps, might not be sorry to see a great political competitor sink gradually from the stage ; but I am not disposed to imagine that he was either weak enough, or wicked enough, to throw even those obstacles in the way of Eugene which the

prince himself might attribute to him, and still less the many others which have been imagined by those who saw the events from a distance.

For the purpose of terminating all the disputes between France, Spain, England, and the Empire, a grand congress was appointed to be held at Aix-la-Chapelle. The place was afterwards, for the convenience of Fleury, changed to Soissons; and, in order to avoid, as far as possible, all jealousy in regard to points of precedence, a round table was constructed in the grand hall of the city, which had been prepared for the meeting of the ministers. Accordingly, on the 14th of June, 1728, Fleury and the other French plenipotentiaries received Zinzendorf and the representatives of the principal states of Europe at the door of the hall, and entering the building, they took their seats without ceremony. Zinzendorf then rose, and in a speech which, we are assured, was full of eloquence, opened the business of the congress. To him Fleury replied, and the negotiations then proceeded.

Much reluctance and selfishness had to be overcome on all parts, and the conferences were protracted for some time; but Zinzendorf had taken care that his train of cooks and couriers should follow him, and it has even been suspected that he sought to dazzle or captivate the other negotiators by the magnificence and delicacy of his table. One of his colleagues died about a month after the opening of the congress; but it would seem that Zinzendorf's principal object was one which could be arrived at without much assistance. It was, apparently, to obtain peace, without binding the emperor irrevocably to any important acts or recognitions, leaving open for him the means of seizing any opportunities which might occur in the changes of eventful times; and his endeavour, therefore, was to delay all the proceedings as far as possible, never granting more than could be avoided, and still leaving questions of dispute. We have seen, in the Life of Fleury, what was the result of this policy; and in such intricate but un-

interesting negotiations, the greater part of the rest of Zinzendorf's ministry was consumed. He took advantage of every excuse for the purpose of cavilling at rights and titles which had been already conceded by the emperor to Spain ; and he kept Europe in a state of irritation, without urging it to actual warfare ; hoping, probably, that the enemies of the empire might be separated from each other by some of the various elements of discord which from time to time he cast amongst them.

At length, however, in 1733, a new and more important question arose in regard to the crown of Poland. Stanislaus Leczinski, aided and supported by France, was elected to the throne of that country, almost immediately on the death of Augustus II., king of Poland ; but the emperor had two grand motives for opposing this election, and for endeavouring to seat the elector of Saxony, son of the late king of Poland, on the throne in place of Stanislaus. In the first place, it was a matter of paramount importance to prevent France, which already dictated almost absolutely to Sweden, from obtaining a greater degree of influence in the north of Europe. In the next place, the young elector was closely connected by ties of blood with the emperor, and was steadfastly attached to the house of Austria. We might also add, perhaps, a third motive, which was, that Zinzendorf was under great obligations to the electoral house of Saxony.

The emperor, however, on the death of the king of Poland, was by no means in such a situation as to undertake to establish on the throne of that kingdom the son of the late monarch, by his own individual strength. France, England, and Holland had, not very long before, forced him to bring the negotiations, which had been drawn out so tediously, to a conclusion, to suspend the operations of the commercial company of Ostend, and to engage solemnly to surrender Parma, Tuscany, and Placentia to the infant Don Carlos ; while, as some

compensation, England guaranteed his states against the aggressions of foreign enemies, and also guaranteed the execution of the pragmatic sanction.* His incompetence, however, to exert any great military efforts, had been shown in his submission to the dictation of the allies ; and while anxious, and even determined, at any risk, to seat the elector of Saxony on the throne of Poland, he endeavoured to do so by the means of others, and had recourse to Russia, who^o was easily persuaded that it was more for her interest that the Saxon prince should reign in the north, than that Poland should be ruled by a complete creature of France.

This endeavour caused rapid negotiations to take place between Russia and the empire ; and even after the whole proceedings were determined, and Russia had taken the burthen of seating Augustus on the Polish throne, it became necessary for the emperor to put his states in such a condition as to resist attack, and he prepared to support Russia in case of need. The negotiations were conducted by Zinzendorf with the utmost skill, but still the proceedings of the court of Vienna could not be concealed from the sharp-sighted diplomatists of France ; and in the end, after Stanislaus had been elected, dethroned, and expelled from his dominions by the Russian troops, Fleury exposed the whole secret negotiations of Zinzendorf and the empress, and formally declared war against the Austrian monarch. The result, as we have shown elsewhere, was most disastrous to Charles VI. Eugene was no longer capable of any very great activity ; no man of equal talent had risen up to supply his place ; and in the course of 1734, a series of the most lamentable defeats deprived the emperor of almost every foot of ground he possessed in Italy. Other successes, though not equal in extent, attended the French arms on the Rhine ; and in the year 1735 the emperor was forced to conclude a peace with France, which might, it is true, have been

much more disadvantageous than it proved, and which left the emperor the honour of having seated Augustus on the throne of Poland.

This termination of an unsuccessful war,—a termination by which the emperor obtained the restitution of all the territories which had been taken from him in Italy and on the Rhine, with the exception of Sicily and Naples; and by which he gained also, as compensation for the loss of those states, the duchies of Parma and Placentia, and the guarantee of the French king for the execution of the pragmatic sanction,—was, there can be no doubt, greatly to be attributed to the skill and dexterity of Zinzendorf. A number of treaties and conventions followed, in which the imperial minister displayed the same skill, and obtained every advantage that he possibly could for his master, under the reverses which he had suffered.

It is clear that, notwithstanding his great services, and although, in the latter treaties and conventions with France, Zinzendorf displayed the greatest zeal, as well as the greatest foresight, in guarding the privileges of the princes of the empire, the imperial chancellor was any thing but popular, either with those princes, or with the German people in general. In the first place, they judged of him no, so much by the comparison of the successes that he obtained with the adverse circumstances under which he obtained them, as by their own preconceived hopes and expectations. But at the same time it must be remarked, that he was haughty and repulsive in his manners, treating even the princely persons with whom he had chiefly to do, with an assumption of state and dignity which offended their pride, and consequently, of course, incurred their resentment. He was cold and reserved too, we are told, in all his political transactions, impenetrable to inquiry, without frankness or candour upon any subjects except arts and sciences and the pleasures of the table, and totally different in his whole demeanour from prince Eugene, who had led the princes of the empire rather than ruled

them, and obtained by kindness what Zinzendorf required with severity.

The popularity of the emperor greatly declined after the death of Eugene ; and certainly his chief minister, though an enlightened patron of all liberal arts, though fond of men of genius, and possessed of a high and cultivated taste, was not a person to seek or obtain the favour of the populace, either for himself or others. But the popularity of both emperor and minister was greatly affected by events over which they had little control. The Turks again assailed the empire. Success had abandoned the imperial arms ; and the close of the days of Charles VI. was shadowed by many cares. At length that prince died, October 20. 1740, leaving the vast possessions of the house of Austria to the generous but ill-treated Maria Theresa, who, after the conclusion of the last peace, had married the young duke of Lorraine, afterwards grand duke of Florence.

No sooner was her father dead, than the duke of Bavaria protested against Maria Theresa's right to succeed ; and the king of Prussia, while he affected friendship, prepared to plunder her of a part of her territories. Zinzendorf exerted himself vigorously, in the first instance, to do all in his power to carry into effect the pragmatic sanction, which he had been so instrumental in arranging, and Maria Theresa immediately confirmed him in all those posts and dignities which he had enjoyed under her father. But the minister, notwithstanding the fact of the pragmatic sanction being guaranteed by three great powers, saw, in the prospect, dangers and difficulties requiring more active exertions than could be expected from a man in his sixty-ninth year, whose health was now beginning to show strong symptoms of decay.

To his efforts, probably, may be ascribed the advantages with which Maria Theresa commenced her reign,—the recognition of her title by Upper and Lower Austria and by Hungary ; but after having done what he could to serve the child of his master, Zinzendorf, probably

feeling that his life, as well as his ministry, could not endure very long, retired from public affairs. His habits of indulgence were not calculated to prolong existence in a state of inactivity; and on the 8th of February, 1742, he died of a sudden attack of apoplexy.

Notwithstanding his great celebrity, his character, neither as a man nor as a minister, would seem to deserve any very high commendation. He was cool, keen-sighted, and penetrating, it is true, in his negotiations; but he was often inactive, and never laborious. It has been remarked by all persons who have mentioned his character, that the affairs in which he was employed seldom proved successful: but that might be urged against many of the best and wisest ministers; and a more important charge may be found against Zinzendorf, in the strong suspicion of corruption which has always attached to him, particularly in the negotiations with Ripperda. The style of his despatches was heavy, and can by no means be considered as finished; but Austria was, at that period, in the unfortunate position where it often seemed necessary to conceal her situation from her friends, rather than display it. As an example of his correspondence, I add one of his letters to the duke of Marlborough, as I find it translated by Lediard. It is to the following effect: —

Translation of a letter from count Sinzendorff to the duke of Marlborough.

“ I understand, by the letter your highness was pleased to write me off the 23d of May, the uneasiness you were then under with regard to the state of affairs on the Rhine; which, without doubt, is increased by the behaviour of the army of the empire, when the marshal de Villars passed the Rhine. I confess this is a very unlucky accident, which would not have happened if we had had a competent chief at the head of our troops. Your highness knows, that the first proposal was to send for the prince of Savoy, and that it

was afterwards thought proper, in England and Holland, to change that purpose ; though I will not pretend to say whether this might not have been the most reasonable project. Count Stahremberg was put in the room of this prince, but immediately this resolution was changed ; and thanks be to God, the whole court was witness that I had no hand in it. After this it was determined to send the marshal de Heister thither ; but his departure has been hitherto delayed. I am sorry I am obliged to trouble your highness with these particulars ; but, in short, there are certain moments at courts in which it is impossible to put a stop to, or hinder, those evil resolutions which one frequently has reason to wish otherwise in the sequel. In this unhappy juncture, I have proposed the elector of Hanover for this command ; because I believe it necessary the army of the empire should have a chief, whose birth and personal merit may carry a weight with them. Besides, this prince has yet spare troops in his dominions, has money, and is of indefatigable application. Endeavours have likewise been made to surmount certain difficulties made by some, as well with regard to those princes who oppose the ninth electorate, as in consideration of several other reflections ; and his imperial majesty has thought fit to instruct the elector of Mentz to take upon him to make this proposal to the elector of Hanover, and that the empire might be disposed at the same time to approve of this resolution. What now remains is your highness's concurrence, at the same time that the queen and the states-general give theirs. I shall communicate these particulars to the counts de Goes and de Gallus, that they may make the necessary representations. By this means, I hope the affairs on the Rhine may be retrieved ; for I cannot be persuaded that the enemy's army is as numerous as they make it. We have not yet been beaten, and besides the troops of Hanover, to the number of six battalions, and a regiment of dragoons, which would accompany their prince, more troops may be drawn

from the circle of Westphalia, from Munster, and the Palatinate, and 5000 men of the troops of king Augustus, if the queen and the states-general should think it proper to send them to the Rhine. With these, it is certain, a considerable army may be formed, not far beneath 60,000 men. I do not at all doubt, but Monsieur de Richteren, to whom I have communicated this resolution, will inform your highness and the states of it; and that before all things you will consider that these 5000 men of the troops of king Augustus may be employed to good advantage on the Rhine. I shall defer till my run to give your highness a more ample detail of these matters, as well as of the affairs of Italy and Spain, which I shall be better able to do, because we shall be a little better informed of the intentions of the king of Sweden.

I am, &c.,

My lord duke,

Your highness', &c.

COUNT DE SINZENDORFF.

Vienna, June 4. 1707.

SEBASTIAN JOSEPH, MARQUIS OF POMBAL.

BORN 1699. — DIED 1782.

SEBASTIAN JOSEPH CARVALHO MELHO, one of the most remarkable men of his age, and certainly the most celebrated minister that Portugal ever produced, was born at Soura, a small town in Portugal, in the year 1699. The details of the early life of Pombal do not seem to be very clearly ascertained. He is reported to have been a bold, high-spirited, beautiful boy, and to have received his first education in the small town of his birth ; his father being merely a Portuguese gentleman of the second class of nobility. The young Carvalho was destined, in the first instance, to the profession of the law, and for a short period pursued the necessary studies at Coimbra, which was not far distant from his native place.

Whether the dryness of the study itself, or the severity of the masters in that celebrated university, disgusted the fiery and impetuous spirit of the young Carvalho, it is certain that he soon became tired of studies requiring talents which he certainly did not possess ; and, obtaining permission to quit the study of the law for the more active and enterprising career of a soldier, he entered the service as one of the guards of the palace of John V., king of Portugal. He was at this time remarkable for personal beauty, graceful, and with a striking countenance full of animation and vehemence. His stature was considerably above that of ordinary men, and his bodily strength prodigious : his courage also, through life, was remarkable ; and his constancy, determination, and contempt for every thing like danger, may be considered as one of

the causes of his elevation to the high station that he acquired.

It would seem that, on entering the service, he obtained no higher rank than that of a private ; but it must be remembered that the rank of private in the royal guard offered nothing in those days derogatory to his nobility of birth. His family, too, though undoubtedly noble, was extremely poor ; and it would not appear that his mother, who was of the high race of Mendoza, brought any wealth to her husband, Emanuel de Carvalho. Neither does she seem to have retained that influence at court which one of her family might be supposed to possess ; and the only interest which young Carvalho could hope to employ in the capital, was that of his uncle Paul, a canon of the royal chapel of Lisbon. He thus entered the guards, as we have said, as a private : but it would appear that the violence of his passions, and the imprudence of youth, led him into a number of errors, which impeded his promotion ; and notwithstanding his courage, and all the many remarkable qualities he possessed, he never obtained a higher grade than that which is similar, I believe, to our rank of sergeant.

What was the cause of his quitting the service, I have not been able to discover. By some he is said to have been forced to retire from it in consequence of various irregularities of conduct ; while others ascribe the act to disgust at the inferior situation in which he was kept. Certain it is, however, that he had left it before the year 1735, and that he returned, for a time, to his native place, in poverty and obscurity. One of his biographers asserts, that at this time he had married a widow of the name of Mendoza ; but I am not inclined to give the slightest credit to the assertion, believing it to be entirely founded on a mistake, originating in what was a common custom in Portugal, namely, for the younger sons of noble families to take the name of their mother, which was actually done by Carvalho's brother.

The first marriage which he is proved by incontrovertible evidence to have contracted, was that with Theresa de Noronha Almada, a young lady of one of the most distinguished families in Portugal, and of considerable beauty. His marriage with her, however, was entirely against the will of her relations. He had found means, notwithstanding their difference of situation, to win her affection, and, with the prompt determination which distinguished him, had carried her off, and married her, much to the indignation of all the haughty members of the family of Arcos, who showed for the young adventurer a degree of contempt and reprobation which was not forgotten by him when he became the ruler of the nation.

After having passed some time unemployed, Sebastian Carvalho returned to Lisbon; driven, there is much reason to believe, by a state approaching absolute want, to seek to advance his fortunes by any means in his power. His progress now was very different, however, from that which it had been before. His uncle exerted himself to serve him both zealously and successfully. The canon had attached himself to cardinal Motta, who at that time possessed very great influence over the mind of John V.; and, through the means of Paul Carvalho, the young Sebastian was introduced to the cardinal. The transactions which followed, and which led to his sudden and extraordinary elevation, are not accurately known; but we suddenly come upon the extraordinary change from a private in the king's guards, to an envoy extraordinary to the court of London. Such was the surprising alteration which took place in the fortunes of Carvalho in the short space of three or four years.

The post which he had now obtained did not, indeed, afford him any great opportunity of showing his talents as a statesman; and the only public act which I have found recorded of him during his stay in England, was that of presenting a memorial against some onerous duties laid upon Portuguese wines. The responsible office, however, which he filled, gave him that station in society

which might well afford the first grand step to further advancement ; and it gave him also the opportunity of extending his acquaintance in the political world,—a world in which he was destined thenceforth to move and shine. He remained in London between five and six years ; and there can be no doubt that the freedom of which he was a daily witness communicated its spirit to his bosom ; that the excessive privileges of the high nobility of his native land appeared to him, who had suffered thereby, in a more odious light than ever, when compared with the moderate portion of aristocratic influence possessed by the nobles of Great Britain ; and that his character, without losing those qualities which distinguished it before, was greatly modified by the sight of British institutions. It was natural, indeed, that it should be so ; for his was a nature which combined in itself the keen and fiery passions of the south, with that deliberate, determined, and resolute perseverance, which suffered no change of time to affect its course, and no impediment to bar its progress. In almost every act of the life of Pombal as a minister, will be found some trace of his long residence in England.

In 1745, Carvalho was recalled from the court of St. James's, and almost immediately after was sent on a mission to Vienna. One of the grand objects of his present embassy, which was looked upon as one of much greater importance than that to the court of London, is said to have been to tranquillise the differences which had arisen between the empress Maria Theresa and the pope concerning the patriarchate of Aquileia. With the minute events of this negotiation I am unacquainted ; and probably it possessed no great interest for any but the parties concerned. The first wife of Carvalho had by this time left him a widower, and he now married a second time. The person of his choice was the young countess Daun, niece of the celebrated Austrian general, count Daun ; and it would appear, that though Carvalho had now attained a prominent situation in the eyes of Europe, he met with very great opposition on the part of that lady's family.

The alliance, however, was completed in spite of every impediment; and Carvalho not only gained, through his wife, an accession of importance, but obtained a very great increase of influence at his own court,— the young countess acquiring, in a very high degree, the favour of the queen of Portugal herself.

It would appear that John V. was by no means well disposed towards Carvalho himself; being led, we are told, by the bold censures which that minister occasionally uttered regarding various social and political institutions in Portugal, to look upon him as a scheming and theoretical politician, likely by his wild devices to disturb the rusty tranquillity of Portugal for the sole purpose of introducing changes of problematic advantage. John V., however, was now approaching rapidly towards his end. The queen was favourable to Carvalho, and the young prince Joseph was at that time greatly under the rule of his mother. There can be little doubt, indeed, that, towards the end of the reign of John V., Carvalho may have been so far in disgrace, that, had that monarch lived, he would, in all probability, have been no further employed in public stations; but as soon as the death of that king took place, all the influence of the queen was exerted to obtain for him a situation in the ministry.

The Jesuits, whom he afterwards persecuted so vehemently, take to themselves the credit of having contributed to place him in office; but it would seem that his principal gratitude was due to the queen mother, Mary Anne of Austria, by whose exertions he obtained from her son, Joseph I^o, the post of secretary of state for foreign affairs, towards the close, I believe, of the year 1750. It is not at all improbable, however, that the Jesuit Moreira, who was confessor to the new monarch, was gained by Carvalho, and added also his influence to that of the queen; as it was not likely that Joseph, at that time very much under the influence of the Jesuits, should appoint Carvalho without consulting his confessor. Carvalho, however,

showed no more gratitude than might be expected from a politician ; and the society of Jesus seemed through life one of the chief objects of his hatred.

His first efforts were all directed to give vigour and activity to an administration which may be said to have fallen asleep under the drowsy reign of John V. In those efforts, though he undoubtedly carried his views beyond his own department of the ministry, all his public acts were confined within the natural limit of his functions. The trade with England, and the diplomatic relation between Spain and Portugal, were two of the principal objects on which he employed his energy and genius ; and we shall speak of the latter branch of the subject before the other, as more fully developing his character and the course of his proceedings. The long disputes which had existed between Portugal and Spain had left various questions to be settled in regard to the possession of those two countries in South America ; and, from time to time, negotiations and hostilities had taken place, in all of which the Spaniards had naturally shown the greatest inclination to shut out the Portuguese, by every possible barrier, from the transatlantic provinces of Spain. Under the protection, if not under the rule, of the Spanish crown, was a considerable district in America on the banks of the river Uruguay, known by the title of the Jesuit missions. These good fathers, as anxious to enlighten as to rule, had established these missions for the purpose of converting the natives to Christianity ; and had obtained over them, by one means or another, a powerful authority, which they submitted to, not only with willingness, but with affection.

The Jesuits had always shown, it would seem, the greatest disinclination to admit strangers into territories possessed by any of their missions ; and an idea had thence been promulgated, that immense mines of the precious metals lay hid in the countries over which they had established a dominion. Under such circumstances, various adventurers were of course found

to aspire to the discovery of this hidden wealth ; and many persons in Brazil eagerly desired to put the mother country in possession of these treasures, and to share in them themselves. Such I believe to have been the origin of those negotiations, by which Portugal sought to obtain from Spain the cession of her rights to seven celebrated Jesuit missions on the banks of the river Uruguay. Of course, in order to acquire this territory, it was necessary to offer some compensation to Spain ; and the colony of the Holy Sacrament, then possessed by Portugal, in the neighbourhood of the river Plata, though by no means so apparently valuable, was proposed in exchange.

Spain was well aware that the idea of finding great treasures in the districts called the missions was more or less chimerical, experience having taught the Spaniards the geological characteristics of those tracts in which the precious metals were likely to be found in abundance. It is also probable, that Pombal himself by no means entertained any sanguine expectations of reaping that kind of advantage which the Brazilian projectors set forth. There were various other motives, however, which might induce the minister to desire the exchange. The consolidation of the Portuguese empire in South America was certainly one great object ; and it was equally beneficial to Spain, in that point of view, to obtain possession of the continually contested territory of the Holy Sacrament, as it was for Portugal to get possession of the missions. Various delays, however, in the definitive arrangements had occurred, and it was left for Carvalho to carry into execution what his predecessors had devised.

The treaty first signed in regard to this transaction bears date 13th of January, 1750, about six months before the death of John V., and consequently before the accession of Carvalho to the ministry. He urged on the transaction, which had languished, almost as soon as he had entered upon office ; and Andrada, the governor of Rio Janeiro, and the Marquis of Valderios, received au-

thority from Portugal and Spain to carry the treaty into execution. The inhabitants of the missions, however, were not so much accustomed as the denizens of many of the petty states in Europe, to be transferred like sheep from hand to hand ; and a spirit of resistance rose up in the colonies, which required time, labour, and even bloodshed, to allay. The Indians of those settlements had learned to regard their neighbours of Brazil with hatred and with fear. Whether or not these feelings had been implanted and encouraged in their bosoms by the Jesuits, or whether they had arisen from the brutality and outrages of the mixed race of Portuguese and Indians who inhabited the wilds and fastnesses of the back settlements of Brazil,—a lawless, daring, sanguinary, and profligate race, sprung from expatriated malefactors by their intercourse with the women of the country, and called Mandrusses,—was difficult at the time to discover, and would be still more difficult now to prove. In all probability, however, both these causes combined to produce the dislike which the Indians felt towards the Portuguese at the time that the exchange of territories was determined upon.

After the treaty was finally signed, however, and it was notified to the Jesuits that the two governments were about to carry it^o into effect, that body, to all appearance, exerted themselves to see the provisions of the convention between Spain and Portugal executed without opposition. The Society of Jesus, however, had not established in Europe a very high reputation for sincerity ; and their enemies made use of the character for double dealing which they had obtained, to urge against them charges as false and exaggerated as those which had been brought forth against the Templars in a former age. It was now universally reported that the Jesuits, while affecting to preach submission and compliance to the Indians under their rule, instigated them secretly to resist the transfer about to be made ; and Carvalho, in all his feelings and principles opposed

to that body, did not fail to take advantage of every specious pretext to humble them and depress their power. The first appearance of opposition induced him to employ force ; and his brother, who had taken the name of Mendoza, was sent out as captain-general and governor of the province of Maranon. The Jesuits have affirmed that Carvalho furnished his brother with secret instructions to overturn all their power and influence, and to make false reports of the state of the country to the Portuguese monarch : but, on the one hand, as it is by no means proved that the Jesuits did employ any means whatever to raise the inhabitants of the missions into revolt, or to nurse the rising spirit of resistance ; so, on the other hand, it is not made clear that the Portuguese minister gave to his brother any instructions but to restore tranquillity to the province, and to maintain the authority of the Portuguese government.

The history of Paraguay and its dependencies, and the picture given of that country under the rule of the Jesuits, is one of the most interesting in the world, but is too long to be dwelt upon particularly in this place. Suffice it to say, that the good Jesuits had made themselves loved and esteemed, had won from barbarism a vast number of the wild tribes of Indians, had converted them to Christianity, had bestowed upon them civilisation, and had brought them under a form of government, in which they were ruled hardly knowing it, and guided rather than commanded. Such was the state of the Jesuit missions at the time of the transfer of the territory from Spain to Portugal ; and the resistance of the people to the introduction of the new rule was long and pertinacious. It was at length suppressed ; and the only great effect that it produced on the situation of Carvalho was, that, by inflaming the anger of Joseph I. against the missionaries, it gave the minister an opportunity of assailing the Jesuits in any way he thought fit. It would appear, indeed, that the Portuguese

minister did not deal altogether fairly by Spain ; for we find that the territory of Sacramento remained in the hands of Portugal.

In the mean time, however, the minister for foreign affairs extended his exertions to the commercial transactions between Great Britain and Portugal, and endeavoured, by edicts and regulations, to prevent the exportation of gold from his own country to Great Britain. The attempt immediately called forth remonstrances on the part of England, the support of which country was too valuable to Portugal to be lost. The edicts of Carvalho, indeed, remained—I do not find, at least, that they were formally rescinded, but they were suffered to drop into desuetude, and the commerce of Portugal and Great Britain proceeded nearly as before.

The vigour and activity of Carvalho's government, the keen and decisive policy which he pursued, and the quick and fiery eloquence with which he advocated the measures he judged applicable to the exigency of the moment, were all calculated to dazzle and please the new sovereign of Portugal ; and from a very short period after that minister's entrance into office, the whole power of the state was virtually deposited in his hands. No one can deny that, in almost every point of internal administration, he exercised the influence intrusted to him for the benefit of the country. In order to render Portugal a commercial nation, he made the most immense efforts in every respect. The opinion of every merchant was to him of value : he may, indeed, have listened to such statements too eagerly ; but in no instance was it demonstrated that any line of conduct would be beneficial to the mercantile interest of the country, without producing the most strenuous exertions in its favour on the part of the minister. Agriculture, also, was encouraged by him, as far as it could be in a country so productive and under so warm a climate. Arts and manufactures of all kinds began, under his auspices, to assume an appearance of prosperity which they had

never before known ; and Lisbon itself, cleansed of some of its many impurities, appeared in some degree like the capital not only of one of the most beautiful countries in the world, but of a rich and flourishing commercial state.

Suddenly, however, on the 1st of November, 1755, a rocking motion of the houses throughout a vast extent of country announced the approaching calamity, and shock after shock of one of the most tremendous earthquakes on record overthrew the tall buildings which formed the streets of Lisbon, and, rending the masonry even of the strongest public edifices, cast down churches and palaces in one promiscuous destruction. Darkness covered the scene, the waves rushed up upon the land, the earth yawned, and stopped the fugitives in their flight, and confusion, horror, and death took possession of the Portuguese capital. The earthquake lasted for several days, with but brief intermissions, and very shortly after its commencement a terrible conflagration broke out, which nearly destroyed what it had spared.

Such a scene of horror may be supposed to have admitted of no aggravation. But such was not the case, for the most tremendous exhibition of physical calamities may be greatly increased by the spectacle of moral depravity. When fear and agony were in every bosom, when the death of dear friends and the severing of happy ties were rending the hearts of survivors, who knew not how long they might survive, bands of ruffians, as if judging the scene well calculated for the exhibition of their crimes, spread themselves through the city, robbing, plundering, and committing every sort of excess, murdering the maimed and the living who resisted their efforts to seize property that was not their own, and setting fire to the buildings which had remained standing, for the purpose of covering their depredations.

It was at this awful moment, and in these trying circumstances, that the strong mind and dauntless

character of Carvalho appeared, united, indeed, with a certain degree of ferocity, which, however, might be pardoned on account of the time and the cause. To protect the wretched inhabitants, who had made their escape from their falling houses, and were gathered together without food or shelter in the neighbouring fields, to provide against the famine that was likely to ensue from the immense destruction of property, and to guard against the thousand evils which were certain to follow a calamity which affected the whole country more or less, were, of course, subjects on which his active mind might exercise itself; but at the same time, even while the awful visitation was going on, he took means to put a check on the rapacity of the villains whose crimes aggravated the infliction of Heaven. Soldiers were stationed at all the outlets of the city, the ordinary laws of the land and course of justice were suspended to meet the occasion, gibbets were erected by the road-sides, and every person who was caught issuing forth with plundered property was executed on the spot without mercy.

More than three hundred and fifty malefactors, we are told, were thus put to death; and, throughout the whole, Carvalho displayed a stern determination and calm presence of mind which restored firmness to the court and to the people, and drew down upon his head applause and gratulations even in the midst of horrors and calamities. But the punishment of the guilty was not the only task to which he applied himself; to protect the sufferers, and to repair the evils occasioned by that tremendous convulsion, called forth all his energies and displayed all his powers. The export of grain was instantly stopped; all kinds of provisions were admitted without duty; messengers were despatched in every direction to bring cattle from the country towards Lisbon; temporary slaughter-houses and mills were constructed; public granaries were opened; and every thing that forethought and activity could accomplish, was done to afford the suffering people a plentiful supply, and yet to guard against extravagance

and waste. As soon as the earthquake was ascertained to have ceased, the minister applied himself with the same zeal to restore the city, and his efforts led and inspired the people to make exertions which nothing but example could have produced.

The conduct of Carvalho, under circumstances so awful,—his wisdom, his foresight, his firmness, his energy,—of course commanded the respect of the whole nation; and as his house had remained standing, when almost every other large building had been overthrown, there were not wanting persons to regard him as specially pointed out by heaven for the defence and direction of the Portuguese nation. Some one, indeed, remarked, that the street in which resided the women of the town had also been spared: but the king judged, that, if not designated by divine favour for the exercise of the highest power, he was pointed out by genius as fitted for such a trust, and Carvalho was almost immediately appointed chief minister. Jealousy and hatred, however, beset his course at the outset: the high nobility contemned him, and the Jesuits hated him, on the score of Paraguay. These were two powerful bodies to contend with; but the minister entered into the struggle with the same determined spirit which he displayed on all other occasions.

There can be little doubt, that scarcely had he been appointed to the highest office under the crown, when a conspiracy was formed by the Jesuits for the purpose of overthrowing him; and the nobles, without perhaps entering fully into the schemes of the priests, did all that they possibly could to mortify and thwart him, treating him as an upstart adventurer, and loading him with scorn. The conduct of the minister and his opponents at this period has been made the subject of the most opposite statements, by the partisans of either. The Jesuits have, of course, put forth their view of his conduct; and that view has found its way, apparently, without much examination, into many works of general biography. Pombal is represented as having set out with the sys-

tematic determination of persecuting an innocent and even useful body of men: but there rests not the slightest doubt upon my mind, that the Jesuits in the first instance made the attack upon him; and, indeed, the matter is put beyond all doubt by the ascertained fact, that the pulpits of Lisbon rang with charges and accusations against the minister.

The enmity of the Jesuits was in all ages, since the foundation of their order, a persevering enmity, and the matter of Paraguay was not one to be forgotten by them; so that it is consistent both with a uniform and undeviating practice, and the known facts of the case, to suppose that they laboured for the downfall of a man who had shown no regard for their reputed sanctity, no apprehension of their known power. Shortly after the destruction of Lisbon, a proposal which Carvalho addressed to the king not only increased the enmity of the Jesuits, but arrayed on their side a great body of the catholic church of Portugal. He proposed, as a means of rebuilding, repeopling, and of restoring prosperity to the capital, to give perfect toleration to the Jews, and to insure them consideration and the free exercise of their callings in the new city. The clamour against him was consequently outrageous; but he had already, it would seem, in some degree clipped the wings of the inquisition, by declaring that the decrees of that tribunal could have no effect unless by the expressed approbation of the sovereign, to whom all its decisions were subjected for revision. This was another great offence to the catholic church.

While these proceedings were going on in the struggle between him and the Jesuits, Carvalho was following, with the same fiery zeal which he displayed on all occasions, two lines of conduct towards two other grand classes of men, in which conduct policy and equity were equally violated. I refer to his dealings with the vine-growers in the neighbourhood of Oporto, and with the high nobility of the Portuguese court. In regard to the first, his proceedings are not to be reconciled with any of

his own avowed principles of policy ; and they remain, in his history, both a stigma and an enigma. The districts adjacent to the town of Oporto, famous for the cultivation of the grape, were divided amongst a great number of vine-growers, who again employed a large and industrious population in the cultivation of the plants, and in the making, carriage, and disposal of the wine. All these men became rich in their degree ; and the produce of the soil carried to Oporto always found a ready market filled with eager competitors.

To this open state of trade the vine-growers looked as the source of their prosperity, when suddenly a new wine company was established under the protection of the government, and Carvalho decreed that the market should be closed till that company was supplied with all the wine it chose to purchase. It has been supposed that this act was intended, in some degree, to exclude from the market the merchants of Great Britain, whose wealth, activity, and commercial skill gave them great advantages, even in Oporto itself, over the native merchants of that city. However that may be, a report was industriously circulated, which is at present totally discredited, that Carvalho had some personal interest himself in the wine company he established. But while the wine merchants of foreign nations, and all those many persons whom they employed in Oporto, were busily insinuating corrupt motives against the minister in the city itself, the vine-growers and the peasantry, who depended upon them for support, felt an immediate and evil result from the monopoly that he granted, and rose in arms to oppose it.

It is scarcely possible to conceive, that a man so enlightened as Carvalho should not have known and understood, that there is but one combination of circumstances which can ever justify a government in sanctioning a monopoly. That combination of circumstances is, when some great and beneficial object cannot be accomplished but by efforts, exertions, or by the employment of large capital, either by individuals or by companies, for which

efforts, exertions, and capital there is no likelihood of adequate and immediate compensation, without the interference of government and the adscription of exclusive privileges. Under such circumstances, it is right and just of a government to grant either to individuals or companies, for the attainment of such great and beneficial object, whatever rights and privileges may be necessary to insure to them an adequate return for the required employment of exertion, mind, and capital. But this is the only case in which monopolies are at all justifiable; and even then they require to be guarded carefully at the time of the grant, in order to prevent their cessation, at an after period, from producing evil effects to those engaged in them.

Although we cannot doubt, from the whole conduct of Pombal, that he was fully convinced of the justness of this principle, and that he was actuated by no personal interests whatever, he not only granted the required monopoly, but supported it with all the vigour of government; suppressed the insurrection of the vine-growers with a harsh and bloody hand, sending troops to live at free quarters in the disturbed districts, and putting to death a number of persons concerned in the insurrection. The revolt of Oporto was suppressed; but the love which the people had borne towards Pombal was at an end, at least in those districts; while the rigorous police that he established in the capital, as well as the vigorous measures employed by him to secure peace and industry in the provinces, tended likewise, as all vigorous measures do, to excite against him the hatred of the idle, the thoughtless, and the ill-disposed.

The other impolitic, and not very equitable, line of conduct to which I have alluded, was pursued towards the high nobility. They were, doubtless, an oppressive, insolent, domineering, and greedy race of men, who at different periods had attained from the crown, under false pretences, large portions of the royal domain, which it was by no means clear that the crown had

any right of alienating. Doubtless, also, in many other instances, that which had only been granted for a time, had been by them retained till they raised a claim of right upon the foundation of their own injustice. But still the means pursued by Carvalho to repair evils which the folly or weakness of preceding sovereigns had suffered to arise, were in themselves iniquitous in a high degree, and were also calculated to shake the very foundations of society. In a thousand cases, wherever there was the slightest doubt, and even in many instances where there was no just and legitimate cause for supposing that the various properties had been wrongly obtained, he called upon the proprietors to produce and justify their titles; and in many cases stretched the power of the sovereign to the utmost, in order to strip the high nobles of their estates.

I find mentioned by one of his biographers, that he thus deprived the count of Ribeira of the beautiful island of St. Michael's, of which that nobleman's ancestors had been possessed during three centuries; and there cannot be a doubt that he left no means unemployed to humble the chief aristocracy of the land, to deprive them of political power, and to enrich the crown at their expense. In so doing, he undoubtedly overstepped the limits of reason and justice, and gave his enemies the great advantage of contending with a man in the wrong.

Of his faults and his errors there were not persons wanting to take advantage; and many of the ministers and statesmen connected with the administration of John V. either openly or secretly laboured for the minister's overthrow. But still the most dangerous enemies that he had to encounter, were the Jesuits and the other members of the church, who continued constantly and unremittingly to pursue their efforts against him. One of the principal personages who are supposed to have laboured to effect his downfall, was an Italian Jesuit, of the name of Malagrida,—a person who combined cunning with fanaticism, and who,

there can be little doubt, employed the qualities of zeal, patience, and endurance, which he really possessed, as instruments of ambition. He had become noted, long before this period, for his zeal and enthusiasm, and had acquired, both in South America and in Portugal, the reputation of a saint. By the late king, John V., he had been held in high esteem ; and Joseph, who, if at all, was but little less superstitious than his father, had, on one occasion, gone forth to meet the Jesuit on his return from America, and, falling down at his feet, had besought his blessing. This man, there is every reason to believe, was employed by the adversaries of Carvalho to work upon the weak mind of the king, and prepare the way for the minister's fall. Moreira, too, the king's confessor, to whom the Jesuits pretend that Carvalho was indebted for his first rise at court, now, beyond all doubt, joined his enemies, and laboured strenuously to overthrow him.

To meet these combined attacks, of course, required the exertion of all the minister's energies. But his power over the king was now confirmed, not alone by habit, but by full knowledge and estimation of all his remarkable qualities ; and he had also obtained the support of a churchman, who did not scruple to use his utmost endeavours to aid Carvalho even against the Jesuits themselves. This was the cardinal Saldanha. With his assistance, then, supported by his own extraordinary genius, the minister prepared at once to attack the Jesuits with the same unsparing severity which he had shown towards the nobility, and to punish those members of the ministry who had displayed the slightest appearance of hostility towards his measures. His power over the king was immense ; and he is reported, I am inclined to believe unjustly, to have terrified the monarch in regard to his personal safety, by spreading reports of conspiracies and designs of assassination which were merely imaginary. The Jesuits he represented to the monarch as inimical to Portugal, in consequence of the proceedings in Paraguay ; and it was very evident,

that after having absolutely declared war against them, he could not suffer them to hold in their hands the dangerous power intrusted to the royal confessor.

Moreira was consequently removed without ceremony, though, perhaps, not without some reluctance on the part of the king, who entertained towards him old feelings of attachment. His expulsion from the court was accompanied by the disgrace of all the other Jesuits attached to the royal family, by that of the minister of the marine, the ambassador to the court of France, and a number of other persons considered as inimical to the prime minister. This, however, was not sufficient ; and it so fortunately happened for his purpose, that Benedict XIV., who at that time filled the papal chair, was by no means favourably disposed towards the society of Jesus. Carvalho, therefore, had little or no difficulty in obtaining from the pope, in the year 1658, a brief, as it is termed, of visitation and reform in regard to the Jesuits of Portugal. This brief was of necessity addressed to a churchman ; but Carvalho took care the person selected to exercise the important office of reforming the Portuguese Jesuits should be his friend, the cardinal Saldanha.

No sooner was it obtained, than the cardinal and the minister proceeded with the most rigorous severity to inquire into the state of the Jesuits, and to exercise the power intrusted to them by the brief. Few men, and certainly no bodies of men, could be found in the world, in whom faults or errors could be shown, when the examination of their conduct was intrusted to their enemies, and the decision of those enemies admitted no appeal. Such was the situation of the Jesuits in regard to Carvalho and Saldanha, and, of course, numerous causes of complaint were brought forth against them. Carvalho was not contented with trusting to private inquisitions into their life and manners, but he published "A Relation concerning the Republic, established by the Jesuits of Spain and Portugal, in South America," principally composed,

there is every reason to believe, from the documents furnished by his brother Mendoza, and generally supposed to have been written by himself.

This relation probably contained as many exaggerations as their own account of the conduct of Mendoza * in Paraguay. But it had a considerable effect in Portugal; and on the 2d of May, 1758, Saldanha promulgated his authority to examine publicly into the conduct of the Jesuits, and proceeded with great state to institute the inquiry. The first decided stroke that was aimed at them, was his declaration that they were convicted of various acts contrary to the canons of the church, but more especially of having acted as merchants in various quarters of the world, in contempt of the laws and regulations affecting ecclesiastics. This charge, which was undoubtedly true, and which proved at an after period the proximate cause of their expulsion from France also, was immediately followed by their being deprived, by the archbishop of Lisbon, of all authority to preach or receive confessions in Portugal.

This was a dreadful and alarming blow, striking at the very source of all their power and authority; but their own follies and their own crimes were destined to complete that which their enemies had begun. Nothing had tended more to depress them, than the feeling that the pope himself was inimical to them. They wanted the great support of the united body of their church. Had they possessed that support, and the countenance, approbation, and influence of their supreme head, they could, with their own talents, art, and combinations, have resisted, in all probability, every effort of their enemies: but Benedict had shown himself opposed to them; the Dominicans had long been their enemies; and few of the other religious orders, from which they had endeavoured to wrest the

* I cannot help thinking that M. Guerard, in his account of the life of Pombal, when he says that Mendoza, "hunted down the unarmed Neophytes like game," has listened, not quite dispassionately, to the representations of the Jesuits.

confidence of the people, regarded them with a favourable eye.

Two days after the publication in Lisbon of Benedict's brief, however, the pope himself died ; and the Jesuits were inspired with fresh hopes from the removal of an enemy. These hopes, they fancied, would be nearly fulfilled, if in his place they could raise up a friend ; and every effort was made to give support to the candidate likely to espouse their cause. At length Clement XIII., whose previous life had shown him by no means ill-disposed towards them, was raised to the papal chair ; and the more wise and prudent of their body determined to proceed by means which, though vigorous and persevering, were lawful and righteous. Memorials were instantly presented by their general, setting forth the injustice of the brief of the last pope, which placed them entirely in the hands of their enemies, and displaying the consequences which had already resulted, which consequences they assumed to be cruel and tyrannical.

While these just and reasonable means were employed by the great body of the Jesuits, a considerable number of them in Portugal proceeded, by the way of cabal and intrigue, from errors of a slight kind to crimes of a heinous nature. Don Pedro, the brother of the king, a man who was apparently both ambitious and weak, had shown himself strongly opposed to the government of Carvalho ; had avowed himself, as far as he could venture to do so, the protector of the Jesuits ; and had made his house a meeting place for the disaffected. His conduct, and the conduct of his supporters, had been sufficiently glaring, it would seem, to afford Carvalho the means of alarming the king with regard to the designs of the faction ; and at the very time when the struggle was going on between the minister and the Jesuits, an event occurred, which sealed the ruin of that body in Portugal, and confirmed any apprehensions for his personal safety which the king's mind might have received from the insinuations of Carvalho.

This event was an attempt to assassinate the king, which took place on the 3d of September, 1758. The causes of that attempt, and the facts connected with it, as well as many other parts of the history of Pombal, have been made the subject of great dispute, and the testimonies even of contemporary writers are totally at variance in regard to the real facts. Some persons say that the conspiracy was merely imaginary, being devised by Carvalho in order to ruin some of his enemies. Others, again, declare that the conspiracy was formed by the enemies of Carvalho and the partisans of Don Pedro, for the purpose of killing the king and placing his brother on the throne. Others, with more probability, imagine that the attempt upon the king's life proceeded from personal revenge.

It had been known for some time that the king carried on a criminal intercourse with a young lady of the court, whom I generally find called the marchioness of Tavora, though in some works she is named the countess Ataide de Atouguia. By some she is represented as the wife of the young marquis of Tavora; by others, as the daughter of the old marquis and marchioness of that name, and wife of a count Ataide de Atouguia. However that may be, it is certain that almost all the principal persons concerned in the attack upon the king were either of her immediate family or connected with it; and it is, therefore, very reasonable to suppose that revenge for the degradation of a child, a sister, or a wife, might have influenced the parties. Political feelings, and the instigations of the Jesuits, might certainly have their share in the transaction; but there can scarcely be a doubt that revenge also had its part. The conspiracy itself is now no longer a matter of doubt; a legal revision of the case having taken place in 1780, under another sovereign; and the fact that the king was shot at, wounded in the arm, and narrowly escaped with life, having been placed beyond all question.

The particulars of the story, as usually given, are as

follows: — Joseph had set out, as he was known frequently to do, to visit his mistress in secret, when the conspirators — having posted themselves at different stations along the road, in order, if one failed, to make sure of the monarch's death by the efforts of the others — sought to fire upon him from the first station. The duke of Aveiro is said to have been the first who made the attempt; but his musket missed fire or flashed in the pan, and the king's coachman, alarmed, turned back with all speed. Before, however, he could effect his retreat, two of Aveiro's servants discharged their muskets into the back of the carriage, and one of the balls passed through the king's arm.

No efforts were made at the time to arrest the culprits; but Carvalho applied himself diligently to collect certain information regarding the crime that had been committed, and then, having brought a considerable military force into the city, he caused the houses of the marquis and marchioness of Tavora, and of the rest of the persons implicated, to be surrounded and searched. The duke of Aveiro, the old marquis and marchioness of Tavora, and the young count Ataide were arrested and tried; and shortly afterwards, three Jesuits, generally supposed by the Portuguese people, and by most of those who have written on the subject, to have sanctioned the attempt upon the king's life, were also arrested. The chief of these was Malagrida, who had been long living in a state of what was considered holy retirement at Setubal; and he, together with another Jesuit of the name of Mathos, and another called Alexander de Souza, we are assured, informed the conspirators, who employed the elder marchioness of Tavora to inquire their opinion, that killing a king of the character of Joseph was merely a venial sin. It is, however, to be remarked, that the Jesuits were not tried upon this charge, but were detained in prison long after the other trials were concluded.

The charge against the Jesuits is said solely to rest upon a confession made by the duke of Aveiro

under the torture, and which he afterwards retracted ; but the opinion became general, both in Portugal and throughout Europe, that the Jesuits had sanctioned the crime. The conspirators themselves met with no mercy. They were subjected frequently to the torture, in order to extract confession ; and were at length condemned. But we must remember that the forms of administering justice, and the method of arriving at truth, were very different in Portugal, especially at that time, from those pursued in England ; and if, less than eighty years before, Russell and Stafford could be murdered in England under the pretence of law, it might well happen that the unfortunate family of Tavora should be sacrificed to revenge in Portugal.

I mean not at all to say that it was so ; and, in fact, I am inclined to believe the contrary, inasmuch as a minute investigation was afterwards instituted, under a prince whose partialities were in favour of the Tavora family, and yet but little was discovered to impugn the sentence which had been passed upon them. They were all, as we have said, condemned,—the old marchioness of Tavora to be beheaded, the noblemen implicated to be broken on the wheel, and the two servants to be burnt alive. The sentence was put into execution at Belem, a village not far from Lisbon, and was attended with every thing that could render it awful and horrible. The marchioness was executed first, and the rest followed. The servant, one of them having made his escape, was kept, we are told, till the last, witnessing the whole horrible scene from the stake to which he was attached, and was then burnt alive with the implements of death by which the others had suffered. The estates of the culprits were confiscated to the crown ; their palaces and country houses rased to the ground ; and the spots on which the buildings had stood ploughed up and sown with salt.

Such a tremendous exhibition had, of course, a powerful effect upon the people ; and if the conspiracy had

for its object in any degree to deliver the Portuguese nation from the rule of Pombal and of Joseph, its failure produced the most opposite effect. The apprehensions of the king, of course, placed him more under the influence of his minister than ever, and disposed him to listen to every suggestion which might lessen the power of that class from which the assassins had sprung.

With regard to the guilt of the Tavora family many doubts have been entertained; and so much mystery obscures the whole transaction, that we can but arrive at the fact that they were condemned on very scanty evidence. In the sentence, indeed, pronounced upon the criminals by the high court of justiciary of Lisbon, it is said that many witnesses had been examined, and had proved the facts; but great stress is also laid upon the confessions of the prisoners, which were most likely elicited by torture. However, in reading all the many clauses of the sentence, we become convinced, not only that the conspiracy was real, but that the parties accused were, in all probability, justly condemned. Long trains of minute circumstances are mentioned in the sentence as being proved by numerous witnesses; and it is impossible to believe that all these particular facts would be stated by a great body, such as that of the court of judicature, unless evidence had been received, upon those points, whether absolutely conclusive or not.

It would have been certainly much more satisfactory had we possessed the names of the witnesses, and the particulars of their depositions: but, as it is, there can be no doubt that the conspirators were condemned by a lawful tribunal; that the examination which was ultimately instituted produced no material change in their favour, though suggested by party vengeance to destroy their accuser; and that the daughter of the king continued to regard, to the latest day of her life, the Tavora family as the assassins of her father. The remote connections and partisans of that family differed, also, so much in the principles of defence

which they set forth, that it cast great suspicion on their cause ; and the accusation which they threw upon the young marchioness, of having betrayed her relations, allows us to suppose that there was something to betray. She herself lived to extreme old age, hated, condemned, and reprobated, in a degree not likely to be produced in Portugal by the simple fact of her having yielded to the seductions of the king. Another thing that speaks somewhat in favour of the justice of the accusation, is the well known and admitted fact, that the Aveiro and Tavora families were, a short time before the attempt, at deadly enmity with each other, and then suddenly became reconciled ; and also that the duke of Aveiro had been strongly opposed to the Jesuits till within a few months of the attempt upon the king's life, when he suddenly appeared to act totally under their direction. It is moreover shown, that he had many causes of enmity towards the king ; while his character is generally represented as one which would be easily led to an attempt like that committed.

One of the most extraordinary points in the whole transaction is the fact, that, although in the sentence of the conspirators the Jesuits are pointed out, especially Malagrida, as having taken an active part in prompting the deed, no steps whatever were made towards their punishment, and that they were neither included in the sentence nor the trial. The cause of this forbearance will probably ever remain a mystery ; for the daring and vigorous character of Pombal, as well as the unflinching rigour which he had already shown towards the Jesuits, may well make us reject at once the supposition of Voltaire, that he was deterred by apprehension from proceeding against these men as he would have done against any other criminals. However that may be, Carvalho refrained from following up his accusation against Malagrida for nearly three years ; and, perhaps with great political sagacity, reserved him for an after opportunity, when it might become ne-

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cessary to strike another blow at the Jesuits, and to decry them in the opinion of the people and of the Romish church in general, by exposing some of the follies and wickednesses of one of their great lights and examples.

It is to be remarked that, if such were his object, he was certain of arriving at it much more readily by causing Malagrida to be tried and condemned for ecclesiastical crimes by an ecclesiastical tribunal, than he could possibly have done by bringing him to the scaffold for the attempt upon the king's life. In regard to the latter crime, as Garvalho well knew, there might be many opinions; and the church of Rome itself might hold by the doctrines of some of its saints, who had undoubtedly a friendly leaning towards regicide; but by condemning him for ecclesiastical crimes he was sure to have on his side the great body of the catholic church, and not only of the people of Portugal, but of the people of Spain and Italy. In the one case he would have struck alone at the criminal, in the other he struck at the whole body to which that criminal belonged.

He accordingly delivered Malagrida over to the inquisition, and the trial of that priest commenced for the crime of heresy. In the charges against him, his participation in the attempt upon the king's life is but very distantly alluded to, and the principal crimes really imputed to him are summed up in the following passage, which I find in the report of the proceedings of the inquisition.* "And as the criminal, by means of an hypocrisy and artifice carried to the most refined extreme, had so far gained his point as to be taken for a saint and a prophet in reality, by such persons as the Almighty permitted to want the sense to discover the basis on which the fabric of his affected sanctity was raised and kept up, he carried on the farce so far, that he became at length a very monster of the most enormous iniquity. For, not content or easy with having cheated great multitudes of the

* In a work on the life of Pombal, published in 1808.

people of these dominions out of immense sums, under the cloak of devotion and the pretext of pious uses, by means of a variety of fictions and impostures, he proceeded to pour forth and spread abroad the horrible venom brewed in his heart ; and presumed to prophesy certain fatal events, which he well knew were hatching and contriving in this capital for the mischievous purposes which afterwards were most happily brought to light and made public.

“ And desirous at the same time of keeping up his credit and the reputation for sanctity he had already acquired, the better to authorise his counterfeit revelations of future chastisements, he had recourse to the most unheard-of doctrines, full of heresy and blasphemy, which he broached in a multitude of rash, seditious, and impious propositions, shocking to every pious ear. And these he not only spoke but wrote, and persisted in maintaining at the very council board of the holy office ; where he asserted, that ‘ they were dictated to him by our Lord God, by the blessed Virgin Mary, and by the angels and saints of heaven, who (as he pretended) all talked to him and familiarly communed with him : ’ carrying his infatuation to such a length as to possess himself with the persuasion, that these means, so unworthy of a Christian (though the pure fictions of the criminal’s own malicious brain), were the most suitable ones towards extricating him from the troubles into which he had plunged himself, towards restoring his society to their former state, and towards creating a general panic in persons of all degrees throughout this court and kingdom, to whom he bore an inbred hatred, which the course of these proceedings and his own declarations will render manifest.

“ Of all which ample information was brought to the council-board of the inquisition.”

Such was the real and substantial charge against Malagrida, but there was also a more ostensible charge on which he was condemned ; but as this charge related altogether to St. Anne, and as to whether she could cry

before she was born, we need not enter into the particulars thereof here. The grand inquisitor, it would seem, had refused or neglected to preside ; and we are told that the brother of Carvalho himself sat as chief judge in his place. It would evidently appear, from the report of the proceedings, that Malagrida was an infamous impostor, partly, perhaps, the dupe of his own deceits, but not altogether ; licentious in his morals, covetous in his devotion, and blasphemous in his piety. He was, however, subjected to a long and terrible trial, and condemned to death as a heretic. With the usual infamous hypocrisy, which characterised the whole of the proceedings of the inquisition, that sanguinary tribunal, in delivering him over to the lay power, recommended him to mercy, which they knew that their sentence excluded. He was afterwards condemned according to custom by the lay court, and burnt in the square of the Rocio, having first been strangled at the stake.

It has been held, that defeated conspiracies strengthen the hands of government ; and though I entertain many doubts of the fact, regarded as a general proposition, the effect was certainly such in the present instance. In the mean while, however, Carvalho was proceeding in his purpose of expelling the Jesuits from the Portuguese dominions, and even, we are assured, of dissolving the order itself. In the latter part of his design he was not successful at the time, as his own unsupported efforts could not, of course, effect that object, and the great body which he assailed had still many supporters throughout Europe. At the head of those supporters was Clement XIII., who resisted every effort made by the Portuguese minister to induce him to suppress an order which had vigorously and strenuously struggled in behalf of the church of Rome in all times of danger and difficulty, and whose zeal, talents, and determination were more than ever wanted in its defence.

The expulsion of the order from Portugal, however, was in Carvalho's own power, and that power he did not scruple to exercise almost immediately after the conspiracy

against the king's life. All the professed Jesuits of the kingdom,—that is to say, all those who had taken the last vows,—were collected by order of the minister, embarked in foreign vessels, and deported to the shores of Italy. Their religious houses were dissolved; the order was formally proscribed; and those who had not taken the last vows were only permitted to remain, it would appear, in order to induce them, by the persuasions of friends and relations, and the strong ties of natural association, to abandon their order and remain in Portugal. But never was the extraordinary power over the human mind, possessed by the Jesuitical institutions, more strongly displayed than in the present case. To a man, the young Jesuits adhered to their order. Neither the love of their kindred nor of their country, neither the entreaties of parents and friends, nor the prospects of wealth and emolument, could induce them to stay; so that, finding every effort in vain, Carvalho at length included them in the severities exercised upon their brethren, and caused them also to be transported to the shores of Italy.

The resistance exhibited by the pope had excited the anger of the Portuguese minister, and the papal nuncio at Lisbon was ordered to quit Portugal in 1760. The absolute cause assigned for his dismissal by the Portuguese court was, I am led to believe, some ceremonial offence regarding the marriage of Don Pedro, the king's brother, with his niece, afterwards queen of Portugal; but there can be no doubt that the real cause of that event was a brief published by the pope in 1759, in favour of the whole body of Jesuits, which Carvalho declared to be insulting to the dignity of his master. An absolute breach now occurred between the courts of Portugal and Rome; and Carvalho was not a minister to suffer such a breach to take place without carrying on the war with a spirit of determination which was almost certain to give him the advantage.

He formed a sort of council of ecclesiastics and laymen, at the house of the patriarch, by whom a

manifesto was drawn up aiming directly at the power of the church of Rome, setting forth the lawful, reasonable, and necessary influence of the church, and repudiating its interference in secular affairs. Going even still further, he assailed the power of the pope in regard to church government, declaring that his authority was merely doctrinal, and extending no further. This was, of course, a most tremendous blow, and seemed the commencement of an absolute separation between the church of Portugal and that of Rome. So far the conduct of Carvalho had been prudent and consistent, if not altogether just; but, not contented with these efforts, he called in superstition to combat superstition, and set up miracles to counteract the miracles of the Jesuits.

It would seem that John Palafox, bishop of Osma in Spain, one of the most decided enemies of the Jesuits, had almost as great success in the art of performing miracles as Malagrida himself; but, while the miracles of the Portuguese missionary were held up to scorn by the Portuguese minister as absurd and blasphemous, an extract from the Portuguese ambassador's despatch, which recounted one of the miracles of the bishop of Osma, was published by the authority of Carvalho, and is said to have given him the greatest satisfaction. Movements also were taking place about this time in France, for the expulsion of the Jesuits from that kingdom; and it might be on this account that, in the disputes between the French and English courts, Carvalho interposed with some vigour to obtain an act of justice for France. The ministers of that country were too easily led into the belief, however, that Portugal might be induced to break through her long connection with England; and when, at a subsequent period, the well known treaty between France and Spain, called the family compact, was concluded, Portugal was invited to join the alliance in opposition to Great Britain and to the other powers, against the interest of which that treaty militated most materially.

At that period, the military state of Portugal had been greatly neglected. It is said, that not ten thousand disciplined men could be mustered in all the kingdom. The French and Spanish ministers were pressing in their intreaties and persuasions ; and, while they urged Carvalho to accept a treaty which would have placed Portugal absolutely at the mercy of her two neighbours, they pointed out, it would seem, the difficulties which she would find in sustaining a war. Carvalho had already, I am inclined to believe, insured the support of Great Britain ; but, at all events, he replied firmly and boldly, as became his character. "The king, my master," he said to the French and the Spanish ministers, "would sell the tiles of his palace, ere he submitted to such humiliating conditions :" and seeing that war was inevitable, he exerted himself with his usual activity to prepare against it.

England was called upon for her promised aid ; efforts were made to introduce some order and discipline into the Portuguese armies ; and Pombal, with bold and straightforward good sense, made no concealment from Great Britain of the military state of Portugal. George II. was distinctly informed that his ally in the peninsula had nothing to trust to for her security but the utter desolation of her frontier provinces. Very little aid was granted by England to Portugal ; and the officer who was sent over to command her armies found them in a state which provoked his laughter, but did not induce him to make any strenuous efforts to ameliorate it. He returned to England, having given, and perhaps suffered, disappointment ; and Carvalho called to his aid the count de la Lippe, a German general of considerable reputation and abilities, who did all that was possible to put the Portuguese soldiers upon a better footing. Before he arrived, Carvalho had increased the forces of the kingdom to the number of 20,000 ; some reinforcements and officers had arrived from England ; and, while Spain delayed in making the projected attack upon

her neighbour, La Lippe exerted himself to the utmost to put the frontier in a state of defence, and to introduce such a system into the army as would enable it to meet the enemy in the field.

Ere this could be completed, however, the Spanish forces had crossed the frontier, and had captured Miranda, which was taken in May, 1762. Braganza, Chaves, and some minor places also fell. Almeida made some resistance, but capitulated after eight days' siege. When these places were taken, the Spanish forces were in a somewhat worse situation than they were before; for, penetrating into the wild and uncultivated districts of Beira, with scarcely any road, and neither abundance of food nor water, they lost more men by disease than all the forces of Portugal would have destroyed, had they been ready to encounter them in battle. Such a step, indeed, was impossible on the part of Portugal; but still activity was not wanting, as far as it could be prudently exerted, in opposition to the Spanish forces. La Lippe lost no opportunity which presented itself; and, under his command, general Burgoyne and colonel Lee surprised and totally defeated two considerable bodies of Spaniards at Valencia de Alcantara and Villa Velha.

Great discouragement spread, in consequence, through the troops of Spain; and rains of extraordinary severity setting in, destroyed the roads, spread disease through the armies, and shut up almost every avenue by which provisions could be brought to the forces. The Spanish army retreated before disasters which it could not combat; and, in the following year, the peace of 1763 removed the danger of Portugal. Carvalho is said to have acted ungratefully towards Lippe, and to have been jealous of his rising influence. The fact is known that, when his services were no longer required, the Portuguese minister dismissed him with honours and rewards; but the rest is hypothetical, and may or may not be true. Although the previous neglect of the army showed, in

one respect, considerable improvidence on the part of the minister, another branch of the service had been more carefully attended to, and, during the war, the Portuguese navy proved itself superior to that of Spain. Several Spanish ships were captured by Portuguese vessels of inferior force; and the efforts made during that short war to improve the marine enabled Carvalho to overawe the Algerine corsairs, who had frequently ravaged the coast of the kingdom, and to secure the trade of the country against their efforts.

The internal administration of the country, however, now chiefly occupied the attention of Carvalho, who had, by this time, been created count Oeyras; and amidst a number of reforms, improvements, and institutions of the greatest value, we of course find some changes that were absurd, and some that were injurious. Sumptuary laws, having for their object to encourage home manufacture, were issued by the minister, and the extraordinary expedient of breaking buttons of a foreign make by the common hangman was employed, we may well believe, without much effect. Widows were forbidden to marry after having passed the age of fifty, in order to prevent them from conveying their property from their natural heirs to young adventurers. Another measure, bad in principle, but which, we are informed, produced no evil result, was the monopoly of imported grain, which the government assumed to itself.

By extensive calculations, the production of corn in Portugal, and the consumption of the people, was computed with sufficient accuracy to enable the minister to judge how far the supply fell short of the demand; and, in order to guard the corn grower, as well as to ensure the nation, against scarcity, he took the purchase of foreign grain upon the state, accumulated that which was imported in public granaries, and dispensed it at a reasonable price to the people. Careful and wise regulations were established to insure the merchant who brought the grain to Portugal a fair remuneration, and all parties were contented.

This act, though vicious in principle, lost its practical evil under its peculiar circumstances ; but another act, affecting the same subject, was equally wrong, theoretically and practically. The whole of Portugal did not supply sufficient grain for its consumption ; the districts round Lisbon, occupied in the more productive cultivation of the vine, scarcely yielded a sufficient quantity of corn to supply the capital during a few months. The want of roads and means of internal communication prevented a larger quantity from being drawn from the corn districts ; and, to remedy the evil, Carvalho had recourse to the despotic measure of peremptorily commanding a great proportion of the vines in the neighbourhood of Lisbon to be rooted up, and the land thus left vacant to be employed in the production of corn.

All these acts were more or less unwise ; but it is curious to remark how strongly they were contrasted with the whole of the rest of his policy, which was enlightened in a very great degree, especially in regard to commerce and agriculture. The monopoly of tobacco, so long held by the crown, was removed, and the most beneficial effects to commerce immediately ensued. The minister established an annual fair at Oeyras ; and by the large sums which he himself spent there, and the magnificence with which he treated all persons who flocked thither, rendered it for the time one of the greatest marts in Portugal. He caused, also, the famous canal to be cut from the sea to that place ; and although the censurers of his conduct have discovered in these acts an interested motive, inasmuch as a part of the neighbouring territory belonged to himself, yet there can be no doubt that both his regulations and his example gave new life and energy to the trade of Portugal. He founded, also, a public school of commerce in Lisbon, which was speedily frequented by a great number of students. Public examinations took place every year, and, I believe, on those occasions, he never failed to be present, accompanied by a large body of the nobility.

To his efforts, too, the large province of Alemtejo owed entirely the revival of its agricultural prosperity ; and, under his judicious care, the population, which had been extremely thin, was very greatly increased. But these were not all the benefits that he conferred on Portugal, both the higher and lower classes of which country were in a state of lamentable ignorance. He instituted, not only general public schools in the capital, and various parts of the country, for the instruction of persons in the upper ranks of life, but he provided, as far as his means would allow, for the education of the lower orders throughout the kingdom. In the capital itself he placed one of the most magnificent institutions of the kind. A part of the arsenal was assigned as a place for the education of the children of artisans, and an immense number were there received, instructed in all sorts of arts and trades, and supported for the space of eight years at the public expense.

The great university of Coimbra, also, the faults and neglect of which he had himself opportunities of knowing, came likewise under his reforming hand. It is true that, in regard to this institution, he put forth an assertion which we have not the slightest reason to believe was well founded, namely, that it owed the state of decay into which it had fallen to the mismanagement of the Jesuits. In all probability the cause assigned was not the true one ; but of the fact itself, that it had fallen into decay, there can be no doubt. Ruling the king absolutely, as he now did, he easily obtained the royal authority to examine into and reform the institutions of that university ; and, under the title of king's lieutenant, he proceeded to Coimbra, on the 15th of September, 1772, in great state, and accompanied by a large body of the nobility. The examinations which he then instituted terminated in the expulsion of a number of the professors, in a better arrangement and abbreviation of the vacations, in a very important reform of the course and objects of

study, and in the substitution of many branches of the exact sciences for the wild and dreaming speculations of scholastics. Having thus secured a beneficial change in the course of study and discipline of the university, he augmented the appointments attached to particular professorships; and, both by pressing invitations and the prospect of honours and rewards, he induced a number of scientific and literary men to take up their abode in Portugal.

Such were some of Carvalho's efforts for the diffusion of knowledge amongst the Portuguese people; and, at the same time, he applied himself with noble zeal to alleviate the miseries and ameliorate the social condition of many classes of his master's subjects. The conventional house of the Jesuits in Lisbon became, under his care, a magnificent hospital, where all that could be done to lighten the miseries of sickness and distress was performed as far as the finances of the state permitted. The Jews, and other persons differing in faith from the great body of the population, were protected and relieved, at least in a degree, from the oppression they had formerly laboured under; and the minister exerted himself vigorously to put an end to an invidious distinction which was not only painful in itself, but produced by its remote effects a most injurious result.

All converts to Christianity from any other religion received in Portugal the name of new Christians, which they not only retained themselves through their own lives, but transmitted for ever to their children. Neither could they ever shake off the suspicion which attached to this appellation. They were regarded by the inquisition, and by society, as scarcely confirmed in their faith. They were watched, doubted, and examined, and their slightest words often misconstrued, and made the subject of accusation against them. To strike at the root of such a system, Carvalho published an edict, by which he forbade the use of the expression new Christian, declaring that all persons having once been received into the bosom of the catholic church

were Christians, without distinction, and in no way to be regarded as different from the rest of their brethren. What was the effect of this wise and equitable measure I do not know ; but another act of Carvalho's, founded upon similar principles, tended greatly to relieve an oppressed and suffering part of the population.

At that time, the trade in slaves was in its full and virulent activity ; and it was held in Portugal that the child of a slave always remained a slave, so that the country was filled with a servile race of every shade of colour ; for the least tint of the dark blood of more southern lands, brought with it the badge of slavery. Against such a system the free and enlightened spirit of Carvalho raised itself with vigour ; and by a royal edict he pronounced that every child born in Portugal was free, and that every person who could prove that amongst all his ancestors was one free woman immediately recovered his liberty. He also softened the severe laws then existing in regard to debtor and creditor, let in some light and hope upon insolvent debtors, and gave the means to persons who had been unjustly deprived of property to recover it more easily than before.

These were noble acts, and by these he well deserved the fame he has acquired. Nor was his government of the transatlantic dominions of Portugal less wise. It would be impossible, indeed, to enter into all the minute regulations which he framed for the purpose of increasing the prosperity of the colonists, for rendering the functions of the government in Brazil regular and easy, and for preventing it from burdening or oppressing the people. Suffice it to say, that he did make such regulations, and evidently with such objects ; but he also exerted himself strenuously and vigorously to increase the commerce of Brazil and the missions, not only by encouraging those branches of industry that already existed, but by introducing many new and important objects of exertion ; and he himself lived to see his extensive views and fine efforts crowned with immense success.

As yet, in the Portuguese dominions in South America, notwithstanding the vast advantages of the soil and the climate, the regular cultivation of cotton, sugar, rice, indigo, coffee, and cocoa, had not been introduced, and the products of those countries had been nearly confined to the stones and metals dug from the bosom of the earth, and to such objects as wild cotton, materials for dying, &c. which were produced without human exertion.* Carvalho, however, saw the infinite benefit of promoting a trade in those objects which required active industry to produce, and which would amply repay the labour employed. He accordingly gave the first impulse to the cultivation of the articles we have mentioned in Portuguese India; but carrying his views still farther, and feeling to what height the trade would reach which he thus originated in a distant land, he built immense magazines and warehouses in the commercial square at Lisbon for the reception of the goods imported.

When, in 1772, ten pounds of cotton were sent over as the first fruits of the new plantations, much laughter was occasioned in the Portuguese capital by the disparity between the product and the storehouses appointed to receive it; but Carvalho lived to see those magazines filled; and in 1806 new warehouses were obliged to be sought for those productions which he was the first to derive from Brazil. At the same time he freed navigation from many of the fetters which had bound it down almost to a state of inactivity under former ministers; and he established in Maranon, Fernambuco, and Para commercial companies, which greatly favoured the progress of that industry which he was so anxious to inculcate. The latter district was famous for the production of wild cotton; and, now that it was encouraged as an article of trade, thousands of hands were employed in gathering and packing it.

From the period of the earthquake to the end of his

* I find it stated by some authors that the cultivation of cotton was introduced before the time of Pombal; but I am inclined to look upon that assertion as erroneous.

political career, Pombal was engaged in reconstructing and embellishing the capital city: but the buildings which sprang up under his superintendance have been generally looked upon as ostentatiously magnificent and expensive. A number of splendid public edifices, however, rose from the ruins of the ancient city, the principal of which was the arsenal, which afforded vast accommodation, not alone for the reception of military stores, but for the meeting of traders and for the reception of their goods. Architectural beauty was considered as well as convenience; and he may be said to have terminated his labours in embellishing the city, by erecting a magnificent statue of the king, his master, in the principal public square of Lisbon. One of the four medallions on the pedestal of the statue contained the likeness of Pombal himself; but, though accused by many writers of preposterous vanity, this is the principal trait of the kind that we find recorded against him.

The minister provided, not alone for the embellishment of the city, but also for its safety, as far as possible, by instituting a body of men for the extinction of fire, and by insuring a copious supply of water. The police of the town likewise was infinitely improved, and a number of those moral evils which had sprung from the great calamity of the earthquake were corrected by wholesome severity in some cases, by the prevention of crime in others, and by deporting to the shores of America a multitude of rogues and vagabonds which had thronged the streets of Lisbon, and rendered life and property insecure. To him, too, the country was indebted for the construction of a number of good roads; and in this respect, as in many others, we must not judge the exertions of the minister by what was not done so much as by what was done.

His systematic purpose of lowering the nobles was still pursued with unflinching severity, but he seldom, if ever, attacked any but the great and the powerful.

Against them it would seem that he exercised a degree of harsh and unjust rigour, which remains as a stain upon his character. He was too great and too powerful to fear them, and, consequently, he might well have spared; but he had found it necessary, it would seem, in the commencement of his career, to sweep from his path all the opponents of his measures which sprang up in that powerful and domineering body. For this purpose, in the first place, he caused it to be declared, that opposition to the will of the king came under the imputation of high treason, and, constructively, that opposition to the will of the king's minister amounted to the same offence: but he pursued the same measures against the nobles after he had rendered them no longer formidable; and had consequently deprived himself of any reasonable excuse for persecuting them. He has been reproached by French authors, and it is singular that the reproach should come from persons of that nation, with impeding the alliances which the nobles laid out amongst themselves; but, in these respects, he did no more than has been done by almost every sovereign of France; and, indeed, by the monarchs of many other countries.

His rancour against the Jesuits never ceased, and it was destined, before the close of his career, to meet with the most complete gratification. It would take too long a time to enter here into the cause of the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, to inquire into the justice or injustice of the many charges brought against them, and, after having separated the falser part of the accusation, to see whether there was enough left to justify that act of severity, which was soon followed by another still more deep and fatal to the society. No doubt can exist that clamour and prejudice were as busy against them as argument and reason. They were represented as excessively wealthy, when in reality they were poor: many of the other charges were probably equally unfounded, and many were very doubtful. But clamour and prejudice are at

all times, and have been, in almost all states of society that the world has yet seen, two of the most potent engines in every conflict of opinions. Numbers of persons came over to the views of Carvalho, Choiseul, and other statesmen. Catholic Spain itself repudiated the Jesuits, Naples also rejected them altogether from its bosom, and even Venice and the empire at length raised their voices to demand the suppression of the order.

Clement XIII., however, continued throughout his life to give them his firm support, and nothing that could be done to disgust him with this tenacity had the slightest effect in shaking his resolution. It was in vain that France deprived him of Avignon ; it was in vain that Naples seized upon Benevento ; it was in vain that every country in the rest of Europe vomited forth into the papal states the crowd of hungry, impoverished, and exiled ecclesiastics, which they cast out from their own bosom, forfeiting their possessions with ravenous avidity, and but the more virulent against them from disappointment of plunder ; Clement still remained firmly their friend ; but his life was drawing to a close, and, in the year 1769, his death left the papal chair vacant.

The conclave that followed was even more full of intrigues than a conclave usually is, and it has been supposed, I know not with what truth, that Ganganelli, who succeeded to the chair of St. Peter, found that the promise of a bull for the suppression of the Jesuits was an indispensable condition to the attainment of the tiara. Under his reign at length appeared the famous bull by which the institution of Ignatius Loyola was formally dissolved. This act immediately restored a complete and good understanding between Portugal and Rome. Carvalho gave way to indecent expressions of joy ; Lisbon was illuminated, and solemn thanksgivings were offered up in every church of the kingdom. A nuncio, indeed, had been already received in the Portuguese capital, and an ambassador had been sent to Rome ; but still the authority of the nuncio was very much circumscribed

by the minister, and the pope gave up a part of his authority for the purpose of regaining possession of the rest.

The close of Carvalho's career was marked by the commencement of a new war, and by an attack upon his life. The particulars of the latter event need not be dwelt upon at large, but the punishment inflicted upon the criminal, a Genoese, of the name of Baptista Pele, marks the fierce and sanguinary character of the minister whom he assailed. The unfortunate man was condemned to have his hands struck off, and then to be torn to pieces by horses; and I believe that the sentence was fully executed.

The war which occurred affected the Brazilian territories of Portugal more than her possessions in Europe, though at one period it seemed likely to communicate itself to several of the neighbouring powers. The Portuguese in America had for a long time been in the habit of encroaching daily upon the dominions of Spain; the territory of the holy Sacrament, and several other districts were still disputed; the rio Grande had been passed in 1770, and Portuguese outposts had been established on the Spanish bank of the river. Day by day, in short, new encroachments were made, and at length severe and formal complaints were laid by the king of Spain, which producing little effect, war began in America between the two nations. Carvalho clung to the English for support: but in order to prevent the French from taking a share in the struggle, he courted that power assiduously; proposed that a congress should be held at Paris, for the decision of the existing differences, and even held out the prospect of a marriage between the prince of Beira, heir to the Portuguese throne, and madame Elizabeth of France.

The power of the minister, however, was now approaching its close; the health of the king had been declining for some time, and towards the end of 1776 his infirmities greatly increased. The daughter

of the monarch, and next heir to the throne had been married to Pedro, her uncle, the declared enemy of Pombal, and the object of that minister's hatred through life, so that he had little chance of retaining his influence under her reign. Surrounded by such circumstances, there can be little doubt that Carvalho, who had by this time been created marquis of Pombal*, and ruled with the most absolute sway the councils of the king, proposed to his royal master, to abdicate the crown in favour of his grandson, the prince of Beira, which would have secured to the minister the government of Portugal through life. Whether this project was connected with that of marrying the prince to a French princess I do not know; but the measures taken by the queen during the last illness of her husband frustrated all the plans of Carvalho. He had long been obnoxious, it would seem, to that princess, though the influence which his wife had acquired over her had been one of the chief means of his rise to power. She now, however, did all that she could to shut him out from the presence of his dying sovereign; so that although Pombal still ruled the country with despotic power, he had no opportunity of inducing the king to perform any of those acts which might have secured his minister's authority after his death.

That event took place on the 23d of February, 1777; and on the accession of the young queen, Pombal's services as minister were necessarily continued for a few days. The queen-mother, and don Pedro, however, took care that she should give Pombal no opportunity of obtaining that influence with her which he had exercised over her father; and in the month of March he was dismissed from office, and retired to his estates at Pombal. No sooner was he removed, than the pitiful enmity of Pedro and his faction broke forth; the medallion of his bust which ornamented the statue of Joseph, was torn down; a permission, amounting from royal lips to an injunction,

* Created count Ceyras in 1759, marquis of Pombal, 1770.

was given to write against his government; and, finally, a judicial investigation of his conduct was instituted, especially regarding the famous conspiracy of Tavora.

Pombal, however, knew his strong ground, and to all interrogatories, he replied, that he had acted alone by command of the king. This, however, did not shield him from the malignity of his enemies; and he was condemned for crimes not recognised by any law. We are told, that the trial of Aveiro and the Tavora family was particularly dwelt upon in the proceedings against Pombal, and that they were declared innocent, while he was pronounced guilty. Not having the records of the investigation in our possession, it is difficult to arrive at any certain facts. One thing, however, is known, which is, that the families of the criminals executed in 1759 received no benefit whatsoever from any favourable revision of their sentence; the decree of attainder was not annulled, the possessions not restored, and at the same time, Pombal himself was visited by no punishment in consequence of his imputed crimes. He was, it is true, ordered to remain at the distance of twenty miles from the court, but nothing more took place; and the inference that we must deduce is, that if the court of Maria did investigate the conduct of the minister, and revise the sentence of the criminals, if it did pronounce them innocent, and him guilty, by not atoning to those it declared innocent, and punishing him that it declared guilty, it cast a suspicion upon its equity, which renders its sentence of no value in a historical judgment of the events of the times.

Pombal continued to live on his fine estates for several years unmolested by any farther proceedings against him. The toils and difficulties, the cares, the anxieties, the thought, the exertion that he had used through life, the very violent and strong passions which agitated him, the convulsions of ambition, the paroxysms of hatred, and the fever of revenge, had had little or no effect upon his frame of iron. He lived for

five years after his dismissal^o from office, and died on the 5th of May, 1782, at the age of eighty-three years.

The latter part of his life was spent in devotion, and he showed every degree of reverence towards the church of which he was a member. Anecdotes indeed are brought forward to prove that he became superstitious and fanatical, casting himself frequently at the feet of the bishop of Coimbra, and demanding absolution at his hands. But if we were to trust to all the tales of this kind that are told of every eminent person, we should compose our portrait of every great man entirely of the faults of those who have thought fit to write about him. Pombal left a numerous family, whom he had taken care to provide for, with that just care which every minister may well be supposed to employ, for the purpose of advancing the fortunes of those who have natural claims upon him, and of whose talents and qualifications he has more certain knowledge than he can in general acquire regarding the abilities of others.

One of his French biographers, who has shown the strongest disposition to view his character in the most disadvantageous light, declares, almost in the tone of a reproach, that he left behind him a fortune amounting to about 12,000*l.* per annum. Pombal certainly set out in life overwhelmed with indigence; and if in the course of nearly sixty years, by the utmost exertions of a vast and powerful mind, by the devotion of his whole time, thoughts, and labours, to the service of his country; by conferring upon that country vast and extraordinary benefits; by increasing her commerce; by raising up her agriculture; by providing the means of internal communication; by protecting against corsairs her external trade; by raising her capital from the ashes in which the hand of Heaven had laid it; by increasing individual security, and guarding the lives and properties of the innocent against the vicious; by laying fruitful seeds, if they had but been cultivated, for promoting the general education of the people; by removing a thousand burdens and grievances from various

stuffering classes of the population ; by elevating her colonies to a pitch of commercial prosperity which could hardly have been hoped for by any one—if by all these acts, Pombal did accumulate for himself a fortune somewhat less than that made by many a Portuguese merchant of his own and of our days ; if he did increase his own income in about the proportion of one to five hundred compared with the increase which he effected in the revenue of the state, shall we wonder ? shall we condemn ?

The fortune which Pombal left, compared with that which he might have made, is trifling, and completely frees him from the charge which his enemies have brought against him, of having in all his acts consulted nothing but his own self-interest. The whole revenues of Portugal were at his disposal :—he ruled the country with more absolute power than ever any of its monarchs had ruled it ; and at the end of twenty-seven years' uninterrupted and despotic rule, with the possession of vast official salaries, and the gift of two large estates from the king for the magnificent services he had rendered during the time of the earthquake and in the rebuilding of Lisbon, he died possessed of a fortune of twelve thousand a year, not one twentieth of the fortune of Mazarin.

In regard to the character of Pombal, there is one great charge made against him by those who take an evil view of his administration. They declare that he acted without any fixed principles of policy ; and in proof of this assertion they bring forward his acts in regard to the various ecclesiastical institutions of Portugal, and in regard to the relations of that kingdom with France and England. The first branch of the charge is, substantially, that he drove forth, persecuted, and maltreated the Jesuits, and yet showed feelings of devotion upon various occasions ; that he at one time circumscribed the power of the inquisition, and at another gave it greater dignity and authority, placing his own brother at the head thereof, and ascribing to it the title of

majesty ; that he imprisoned the bishop of Coimbra for prohibiting certain foreign books without the permission of the government, and yet, at an after period threw himself at his feet and demanded absolution at his hands, together with various other accusations of the same kind.

In regard to the Jesuits, we need scarcely point out that Pombal might be a very religious man indeed, and yet no friend to a fraternity, the first principle of which was to establish an empire within every other empire, and to bring every other authority in subjection to its own. No one can doubt that he looked upon and treated the Jesuits as a political and not as a religious body, though their own assumption and the protection of the church of Rome might produce the occasional mingling of religious subjects with the general course of his arguments against them. The same was the case with regard to the bishop of Coimbra. That prelate assumed to himself an authority in secular matters which Pombal contended could alone be attributed to the crown ; and he punished him for the first attempt to usurp such power, having perhaps good reason to know the encroaching spirit in which it was made. The punishment might be harsh and severe, as was his character. But, certainly, that man is more deserving of admiration than disapprobation who can separate the religious character of the priest from the frailties of the man, and show the deepest reverence to religion and its ministers, even in the person of one whom he has been obliged to punish or oppose in another character.

In regard to his proceedings respecting the inquisition, it is not by any means proved that any change or vacillation of conduct whatsoever took place in his behaviour towards that institution. He curtailed its authority in the beginning of his career, and he left its authority curtailed. To that authority which he suffered to remain in its hands, he certainly did ascribe greater dignity—perhaps, as compensation for that which he took away—by attributing

to it the title of *majesty*. But its sentences still remained subject to the revision of the king; and, though Malagrida certainly did suffer by a decree of that tribunal, yet, I have found it asserted, that he was the only person who absolutely perished in an *auto da fé* during the ministry of Pombal. A number of persons, indeed, were executed in effigy; but, if we examine any of the records of Portugal at that day, we shall find, that almost all the condemnations of the inquisition under the administration of Pombal were not for the wild and visionary crimes which that tribunal was permitted to take cognisance of under other ministers, but for real and substantial delinquencies, attributed to the judgment of an ecclesiastical court; and also, that in those instances where errors of opinion were involved which would in former days have produced, without the slightest doubt, a condemnation to the flames, the sentence was comparatively mild.* That

* I subjoin a list of the prisoners who appeared to be in the inquisition at the time of what may be considered the great gaol delivery of October, 1765, as I find it given, together with the sentences upon them, in an English life of Pombal published in 1814, which contains a very great deal of curious information regarding the life of that minister; though, as will be seen in the text, I have been obliged to differ with the author, not only with regard to opinions, but with regard to facts, especially respecting the continuance of Pombal in office after the death of Joseph; and his having been permitted to spend the rest of his days in peace, after having been dismissed from the ministry.

“ Men who did not abjure their offences.

“ Francisco Gonsalves Lopez, secular priest and confessor; for crediting and spreading pretended divine gifts in a certain person under his religious direction and confession.—Suspended for ever as a confessor and exorcist, and banished for five years to Castro Marino.

“ Joaquim Teixeira, postillion; for assuming the authority of the holy office in order to rob a person.—Whipping, and five years’ slavery in the galleys.

“ Emanuel Antonio Aranha, *alias* Francisco Morreira Bandeira, a sharper or impostor; for pretending to be of the brotherhood of the holy office, and acting as such in behalf of that tribunal, without licence for so doing.—Whipping, and five years’ banishment to Calsita, with a saving of right to the injured party to sue for losses and damages.

“ Antonio Joseph Cesario de Azevedo Coutinho, peruke maker; for swearing falsely against a certain person.—Whipping, five years’ slavery in the galleys, and branding as a false evidence.

“ Francisco Lewis Tavares, friar of a certain order, and Francisco de Santa Theresa, friar of a certain order; for giving false evidence at the tribunal of the holy office.—Deprived for ever of certain privileges, with suspension of the functions of their orders for ten years, and actual slavery in the galleys for that space of time, and afterwards imprisonment during pleasure, in the cells of the holy office.

“ Antonio Leitao, lay brother of a certain order; for the same offence.—

Tombal should have permitted the latter class of crimes to be tried at all, is certainly to be grieved at; for if

Imprisonment during pleasure in the cells of the holy office, and afterwards actual slavery in the galleys for life.

“ *Diego Antonio Xavier, friar of a certain order; for the same offence.* — The same punishments as the two preceding the last mentioned.

“ *Men who did abjure their offences.*

“ *Francisco Barboza, alias Pascoal Mertins, a shepherd; Francisco Leyte, glover; Miguel Rodriguez Curto, husbandman; John de Oliveira, or Teixeira; Joseph Fernandes, a soldier; Vital Pereira Machado, and Antonio Joseph Marquez, alias Joseph Ribeiro, labourer; all for bigamy.* — All these sentenced to whipping, and five years' slavery in the galleys.

“ *Antonio da Costa Ramos, for bigamy; and Francisco Antonio Pimentel, or Antonio Joseph, labourer; for the same offence.* — These two were sentenced to whipping, and six years' slavery in the galleys.

“ *Antonio Francisco, shepherd, for crimes of superstition.* — Banished for two years to Castro Marim.

“ *Benardo Joseph Loureiro, labourer; for pretending to work miraculous cures by means of his great piety.* — Whipping, and five years' slavery in the galleys.

“ *John da Costa Dias, for holding blasphemous tenets, and seeking to obtain riches by superstitious practices.* — Banished for three years to the bishopric of Vizcaia.

“ *Joseph Antonio da Silva Ferreira, notary public; Bonaventura de St. Jago, and Anastasis dos Santos, secular priest; for speaking ill of the proceedings of the holy office.* — Banished for five years to Angola.

“ *Jacinto Joseph Coelho, secular priest, an officer of the holy office; for speaking ill of the holy office, and revealing certain proceedings of that tribunal.* — Deprived of his employment in the holy office, and banished for seven years to Angola.

“ *Bernardino Joseph de Andrader, bachelor of law; for scandalous and heretical opinions, not paying due reverence to the holy sacrament, and for speaking ill of the proceedings of the holy office.* — Perpetual imprisonment in the cells of the holy office.

“ *Emanuel Ribeiro, alias d'Emanuel Xavier, alias Sebastian Xavier, a clergyman in minor orders, sentenced at Coimbro, at an act of faith on the 26th of September, 1745, for having said mass and confessed people without being qualified; for not complying with the banishment to which he was then condemned, and afterwards for being guilty of the same offences.* — Stripped of his religious habit, whipping, and ten years' slavery in the galleys.

“ *Gabriel Nunes, a liver by his wits; for crimes of Judaism.* — Confiscation of his effects, with imprisonment, and the habit of ignominy during pleasure.

“ *Daniel Nunes, for the same offences.* — His punishment the same.

“ *Antonio Francisco Leyte, secular priest, and confessor; for atheism.* — Imprisonment, and the habit of ignominy during pleasure, incapacitated for any kind of office, suspended for ever from his religious functions, and banished to the city of Eroca, out of which he is not to go.

“ *Antonio Carlos Monteiro, secular priest and confessor; for atheism.* — Imprisonment and habit of ignominy during pleasure, with suspension from religious functions.

“ *Women.*

“ *Catharine Marquez, in effigy, having died in confinement, accused of Judaism.*

“ *Josepha Theresa Freire, for bigamy.* — Banishment for three years to Guarda.

“ *Louiza Francisca, for the same offence.* — Banishment for three years to Porto.

there ever was a minister who could have swept away, that iniquitous tribunal, the inquisition, altogether, it was himself. But we may exact too much even from men of great and powerful minds; and when any one begins to reform evils, we are but too much inclined to expect that he should reform all.

In regard to the conduct of Pombal towards England and France, no one, who considers the state of Portugal, between her somewhat covetous and greedy friend, Great Britain, and a power which professed to seek her alliance, but was scarcely less grasping, in France, can doubt that it was his duty to his sovereign and to his country to balance, as far as possible, the influence of one by the influence of the other. He did not in any degree break with England; he kept up with a nation, which had always been the friend of Portugal, and had on many occasions rendered her vast services, a close and intimate alliance, though from time to time he found it necessary to show that other countries were willing to give their support to a kingdom which might not be able, perhaps, to defend itself, but which could hold out great advantages to those friends who aided it in a moment of difficulty.

His proceedings in regard to the wine company of

" António Carvalho, for crimes of superstition, and pretending that he had held conversation with the soul of a certain deceased person — Banishment for three years to Viseu

" Joseph de Jesus, for crimes of superstition — Banishment for three years to Irian

" Margareta Josepha, for disrespect shown to the image of a saint — Banishment for three years to Busto Martini

" Amadore Mariana Ignatia de St. Miguel, nun of a certain order, for feigning visions and revelations for spreading and writing erroneous doctrines — Deprivation of privileges, imprisonment during pleasure in the cells of the holy office, and afterwards for life in the convent of Calvário

" Agumaro Nunes, for crimes of Judaism — Imprisonment, and the habit of ignominy for life

" Besides those above mentioned, the two following died in the prison of the inquisition, but were pronounced innocent — Men who died in prison, but were judged innocent and brought out in effigy

" John da Cunha, friar of the order of barefooted Carmelites, accused of having conceived ill opinion of the proceedings of the holy office

" John Perreira da Cunha, knight of the order of Christ, accused of having been guilty of idolatrous crimes "

Oporto were, indeed, likely to be injurious to British trade ; but rather than permanently alienate so powerful a supporter, he in a great degree modified the regulations complained of. But he did not yield more than necessary to obviate the chance of a rupture with his great ally, and, on the other hand, would not suffer himself to be tempted by France any further than was required to obtain a counterbalancing influence to that of England. France, indeed, put forth claims to be treated in all mercantile points on the same footing as England, and declared that Pombal had held out hopes that such would be the case. But there can be little doubt that this was a diplomatic assumption on the part of France ; and Pombal at once and pertinaciously denied that he had given the slightest reason to believe that such a concession would be made.

As a ruler, another serious accusation is brought against him, in which every one must concur: this charge was of displaying severity of the darkest, sternest, and most barbarous character in his proceedings against the high nobility ; and it must be acknowledged, that the virulence and vehemence with which he pursued the objects of his indignation gave an air of truth to the insinuations of his adversaries, that personal enmities mingled with such acts, if they were not indeed the source from which they sprang. This must be conceded by every one ; but at the same time it is to be remarked, that the scourge in the hands of Pombal had been sadly required by the high nobles of his country. Nevertheless, when we find that on opening the gates of the prisons in Portugal 800 prisoners were found wasting away their existence in a living death, most of them of high station and delicate nurture, but who had been subject to every privation besides that of liberty, we cannot but feel that there was dark and terrible injustice committed. All these men loudly proclaimed their own innocence, and rumour and hatred, of course, swelled the account of the victims of Carvalho's tyranny, till we find it stated that 4000 persons perished in

prison during his administration, besides those which were liberated after his fall. Of those who were liberated, many had been in prison for years, and against many no sentence of any competent court was awarded. That any number of men should be in prison six months without having been tried and condemned, is a disgrace to any minister who tolerates the act, and a dark foul spot in the history of any civilised country.

Pombal set out in life an ambitious man. He strove for power ; he strove for distinction ; he himself entered into the high class of nobility which he had depressed ; he married his children into the first families of the realm ; he bestowed high offices on his sons ; he placed one of his brothers at the head of the department of the marine, and he raised another to the rank of cardinal. All this he did, and in so doing was perhaps moved by ambition ; but it would be very happy for all the countries of the world if their ministers could contrive to ally to their personal ambition so many qualities beneficial to the state. Nor have we a right to suppose that his proceeding against the grandees proceeded solely from envy, because he ultimately was placed by the marquisate of Pombal in their class, and sought therein alliances for his children.

In person he was, as we have said, strikingly handsome, gigantic in stature, noble and graceful in demeanour, polite and ceremonious in his manners, and mild and agreeable in his conversation. He had seen much and read much ; so that his society, whenever he pleased to render it so, was both interesting and instructive. He was active and indefatigable in business ; keen, penetrating, and shrewd in his negotiations ; but he knew, even as well as Mazarin, how to make use of procrastination and evasion when any unreasonable proposal was pressed upon him, in order to delay a decision which would naturally be offensive, till circumstances had changed, and enabled him to do so with less risk. Those countries which were not successful in their negotiations with him, have accused him of every sort of

insincerity and faithlessness. The high nobility and the Jesuits laid every crime to his charge, but the merchants of his native country justly revere his name, even to the present day; and Portugal, in despite of struggles and contentions, is reaping still vast benefits from the government of one whom even his enemies allowed to be unrivalled as an administrator.*

* I find it asserted that Pombal would not permit the foreign post to arrive more than once a week in Portugal, and that he forbade any public journal to be published in the Portuguese capital. These assertions require proof of a kind which it would be very difficult to procure, especially as they are totally opposed to the whole course of his conduct; he not only having tolerated, but encouraged, the publication and translation of every foreign work, without any consideration whatsoever of the course of politics which it advocated. Most of the acts of Pombal, however, remain enveloped in a certain degree of obscurity, which he seems rather to have courted than otherwise; probably feeling certain that a time would come when it would be necessary for him to entrench himself behind the royal authority, and to cast upon the king the responsibility of his measures. It is scarcely possible to conceive more contradictory statements in regard to facts, than have been put forth respecting the whole conduct of Pombal, and even respecting the events that followed his fall. Some writers positively and distinctly assert that the family of Tavora were restored to all their honours and estates, while others as confidently declare that no such restitution was ever made. This is only one out of a thousand contradictory statements.

JOSEPH MOÑINO*, COUNT OF FLORIDA
BLANCA.

BORN 1730, DIED 1808.

JOSEPH MOÑINO, Count of Florida Blanca, was born at the small village of Helin, in Murcia, of respectable parents in the middle class of life. His father was a notary, and it would seem, a man of sound and clear judgment, and irreproachable conduct. Though by no means rich, he bestowed upon his son a careful and extended education ; and after having maintained him for some time at the college of the capital of his native province, he sent him to Salamanca, where he applied himself diligently to the study of the law. His progress at the university was, we are told, distinguished, his application indefatigable, and his talents remarked, even at that period.

On his return to Murcia, no opening presented itself, and for several years he followed the profession of his father as a mere notary. He attracted the attention, however, it would seem, of some persons who enabled him to commence his career as an advocate, and soon distinguished himself in pleading. Amongst others who took especial notice of him, and became convinced that he possessed qualities of a very high order, was a catholic priest of the name of Patrick Curtis, who was then domestic chaplain in the family of Ossuna. Curtis, it would seem, introduced the young advocate to that powerful race, who found the expectations which the chaplain had raised in his favour more than verified.

* French writers mention him under the name of *Francis Anthony* Moñino ; but I have followed the account of Coxe, as the only Spanish history I have of that period does not mention his Christian name.

He continued for some time to practise at the bar; gaining daily some increase of reputation, till at length he was appointed, by the interest, we are told, of the Ossuna family, to the lucrative post of one of the fiscals of the council of Castile. There is reason to believe that he also obtained several offices of minor importance; and he himself alludes to some political transactions in which he took part about the same time; but this was the first office in which he attracted the attention of the government.

His next step, and the particulars connected with it, are amongst the most obscure parts of his history. By some, he is said to have obtained the notice of the fierce and fiery Aranda; by others, that he gained the esteem and respect of Squillaci; while others again say, that he was protected from the first by Grimaldi. However that may be, it is certain that he was suddenly appointed ambassador to Rome, under the pontificate of Clement XIV. Circumstanced as Spain was at that time, this embassy was one of the most important diplomatic stations that could have been conferred, and in that delicate employment, the new minister distinguished himself greatly, conducting his negotiations with the wily court of Rome, with equal skill and gentleness, maintaining a great degree of harmony between the pontiff and the king of Spain, notwithstanding the strong and severe measures which Aranda had taken for the suppression of the usurped privileges of the inquisition, and for limiting in every respect the power of the papal nuncio in Spain.

These were delicate and difficult transactions to discuss with the pontiff, who saw himself shorn of a great part of his power and influence in that country, which may be considered as one of the strong-holds of catholicism. But, nevertheless, Moñino, aided indeed by the prudent and complying temper of Clement, smoothed all difficulties, and allayed all irritation. At length, however, Clement was removed by death; and in the year 1775, the conclave assembled, which elected Pius VI.

Every effort was made by the friends of the Jesuits to raise to the papal throne one of the cardinals favourable to that body ; but Spain was at this time decidedly opposed to the order of Jesus. Portugal under Pombal hesitated at no measures against them, and Moñino, with calm and quiet skill, and considerable decision of character, conducted his negotiations with the sacred college in such a manner as to contribute essentially to the elevation of Pius to the chair of St. Peter.

He was still exercising his functions as ambassador to the holy see, and expecting, we have every reason to believe, no preferment of any kind, when he suddenly received a summons to return to Madrid and to assume the higher and more important post of minister. This event was brought about by the retirement of Grimaldi, whose timid and gentle mind was unable to struggle with all the difficulties which must ever surround a Spanish minister. He had been constantly opposed in the council by Aranda ; but during the period of that minister's continuance in office he had remained, in hopes of ultimately terminating the struggle by supplanting his great and more decided rival, whose harsh rudeness, even towards the king himself*, and frequently expressed determination to resign, Grimaldi well knew must ultimately lead to his dismissal.

Charles at length accepted the resignation of Aranda, but appointed him, at his own request, to the post of ambassador at the court of Versailles. Grimaldi, however, soon found that the influence of his rival's powerful mind and numerous partisans was not extin-

* Coxe gives a curious anecdote of Aranda's bold impudence, derived from the information of a person who received it from Aranda himself. It is to the following effect :—“ In the altercations of the cabinet, which marked the latter period of his career, an anecdote has been preserved, which displays the independent and intemperate spirit of the minister, and still more the good nature and forbearance of the monarch. As he was urging some of his reforms with his characteristic perseverance, the king, after in vain attempting to check him, exclaimed, ‘ Count d'Aranda, you are more obstinate than an Arragonese mule ! ’ ‘ Please your majesty,’ rejoined the count, ‘ I know one more obstinate.’ To the question, ‘ Who ? ’ he added, ‘ His sacred majesty don Carlos the third king of Spain and the Indies.’ The king smiled at the tally, dismissed him with his usual complacency, and was accustomed to relate the anecdote with apparent satisfaction.”

guished by his retirement from the cabinet and from the kingdom. Various additional annoyances came to increase the weight of those that he had formerly borne, and after several efforts he also obtained permission to resign, and the honourable distinction of being permitted to name his successor. This distinction, however, caused him a temporary embarrassment; for, on casting his eyes round, he saw no one in Madrid in whom he could conscientiously repose the power which was intrusted to him.

At length, however, his chief secretary, named Del Campo, called to his recollection don Joseph Moñino, who had been lately created, for his services at Rome, count of Florida Blanca. The talents of the person so recommended were beyond all doubt; his uprightness and good intentions were also well known. His mild and pleasing manners, with a certain native dignity which pervaded all his actions, were well calculated to please the monarch. His being a Spaniard by birth, and sprung from the middle classes of the people, was likely to recommend him to his fellow-countrymen, and Grimaldi hesitated not a moment in naming him to the king.* The nomination was at once accepted. Florida Blanca's proceedings against the Jesuits, and the reconciliation which had effected between the courts of Rome and Madrid, after the disputes regarding Parma, strongly recommended him to the king; and perhaps it might also be a great advantage in Charles's eyes that he entered upon the ministry free from all those party feelings and connexions which had so lamentably distracted the Spanish cabinet during the administrations of Grimaldi, Squillaci, and Aranda. As we have said, Florida Blanca was not a little surprised by the news of his elevation; but setting out from Rome as soon as possible, he proceeded rapidly

* The French account which represents Florida Blanca as succeeding Squillaci is quite erroneous. The tumult in Madrid, which produced the dismissal of that minister, his dismissal from office itself, and the appointment of don Michael Musquiz to the administration of the finance, took place nearly a year before the recall of Florida Blanca from Rome, the dismissal of Squillaci having occurred in March, 1776, and the resignation of Grimaldi taking place in 1777.

to Madrid, where Grimaldi still continued exercising the functions of his office till the arrival of his successor. He took much pains to initiate Florida Blanca into the official routine of his new station, and joyfully resigned into his hands, on the 19th of February, 1777, that power, the weight of which had oppressed him.

Florida Blanca assumed the reins of government at a time, indeed, of great difficulty, but at a time also when a number of the most beneficial changes were upon the very eve of taking place, which had the effect of giving a splendour to the very opening of his ministry, and to facilitate all his operations from the commencement. The encroachments of Portugal upon the South American territories of Spain had already called forth the indignation of the Spanish government, and a considerable Spanish fleet and army had been sent out to repel aggression and to make reprisals. At the same time, immense preparations were carried on in Spain for the purpose of invading Portugal itself; so that war, of the most pertinacious kind, appeared inevitable, not alone in remote colonies, but in the very heart of the peninsula.

Pombal, pursuing his schemes with a determination and vehemence which characterised him, offered a formidable opponent, endowed with experience, skill, and habits of business, to a young minister just entering upon office. But scarcely had the appointment of Florida Blanca taken place, when the death of Joseph, king of Portugal, took away from the great Portuguese minister every support that he possessed at the court, and his fall was immediately succeeded by negotiations between Madrid and Lisbon for the renewal of peace, and a final settlement of the differences existing between the two countries. These negotiations were commenced by a proposal, on the part of don Ignatius de Souza, the Portuguese ambassador, which was immediately seized by Florida Blanca, who made but one condition ere he proceeded to treat, which was that the whole transaction might take place without the in-

tervention of mediators. This was readily assented to by the Portuguese minister, who probably had as bad an opinion of the friendly offices of other countries as Florida Blanca himself.

The proceedings then went on rapidly, and messengers were at once sent out to suspend all hostile operations in South America; but they arrived too late to effect that object, Spain having already gained considerable advantages, which, of course, tended to make the terms agreed upon more favourable to her. Such was the first negotiation which was undertaken by Florida Blanca as minister; and he showed therein all the same calm, prudent, and just discrimination which distinguished his ministry in various other respects. The conferences were carried on in Spain, and a preliminary treaty of peace was very shortly arranged, containing many important definitions and concessions in regard to the boundaries of the Spanish and Portuguese territories in South America. Spain, indeed, made some sacrifices; but she yet retained great advantages; amongst which one of the most important was the accurate ascertainment of boundaries, in regard to which constant contentions had previously taken place.

The means were now prepared for bringing about a restoration of that amity and close connexion between Spain and Portugal which had almost entirely ceased during the vehement administration of Pombal in the latter country. These means Florida Blanca did not cease to cultivate, and he received every facility from the ascendancy which the queen-mother of Portugal, the sister of the reigning king of Spain, possessed in the counsels of her daughter. She was induced to visit the Spanish court very shortly after the appointment of Florida Blanca; and by his skill a treaty was drawn up and signed at the Pardo, on the 24th of March, 1778, by which a sort of family compact was entered into between Spain and Portugal.

The respective territories of the two countries in Europe and America were mutually guaranteed, and

the preliminary treaty of 1777 was confirmed in regard to the limits. Neither of the two contracting powers was to engage in any war or alliance to the prejudice of the other. Neutrality was to be observed by the one if the other entered into war with a foreign state, except in case of an invasion of the territories of one of the confederates ; under which circumstances provision was made for mutual defence, with a clause to save the inviolability of existing treaties with other powers. A commercial treaty was at the same time entered into, or rather, I should say, a part of this treaty was devoted to the arrangement of the commerce of the two nations. Each country therein assured to the other an equality of privileges with the most favoured nations ; and it was further determined that the favourable regulations affecting the subjects of Spain and Portugal, made in the reign of Sebastian, should be revived and immediately put in force. Two islands were ceded by Portugal on the coast of Africa, in order that Spain might carry on the nefarious trade in slaves with greater facility ; and a number of other points, regarding the internal communications of the two countries, and their mutual co-operation and assistance in cases of necessity, filled up the rest of the treaty.

This important negotiation and its success gained for Florida Blanca, as it well deserved, the highest credit with his own court ; and Charles, as a token of his esteem for his new minister, offered him the grand cross of the order of Charles III., which he with modest pertinacity declined.

His ministry, however, was by no means destined to retain the same pacific character with which it set out ; and it very soon appeared that a rupture between Great Britain and Spain was inevitable, if the latter country adhered to the policy which had hitherto been pursued by the Bourbon kings of Spain, with very few interruptions. The minister was, in the first instance, decidedly opposed to a breach with England, or to aid

France in her efforts to support the American insurgents in their struggles for independence. Never losing sight of the position of the South American colonies of Spain, he declared that he looked upon the independence of America as a state which would be no less detrimental to Spain than to Great Britain herself. The French, however, exerted their utmost influence to obtain the assistance of Spain, and drew Charles III. into a negotiation as arbiter between France and England, in which the Bourbon prince's natural partiality for the former country led him on, step by step, to support her in her demands.

Before he finally broke off the negotiation as a mediator, Charles had undoubtedly determined upon the line of conduct which he afterwards followed. He had increased his naval and military establishment; he had, as far as possible, prepared every thing in order to give support to France; and at length, even before the refusal of the terms which he proposed to England was known at Madrid, his minister at the court of London had received orders to quit it abruptly, without the ordinary form of taking leave. In this case, the conduct of Charles and of his minister was certainly disingenuous; for Florida Blanca himself acknowledges that during the course of the whole negotiations, which extended over a year, Spain, while pretending to act merely as a mediator, and giving England every assurance that she had no collusion whatever with France, was carrying on, both in America and Europe, preparations, under his own directions, which enabled her to take a vigorous part in behalf of the court of Versailles.

In the mean time, the results which Florida Blanca had expected from the treaty between Portugal and Spain had taken place. Previous to that treaty, the most immense and extraordinary system of smuggling had been carried on in the Rio de la Plata, both by the Portuguese, and under their name, by which the trade of the adjacent provinces of Spanish America had been almost annihilated. No sooner, however, was that

treaty concluded, than this contraband trade was put an end to by the acquisition, on the part of Spain, of those districts in which it had been principally conducted. In a very short time, the commerce of Buenos Ayres was more than doubled, and Spain herself immediately felt, in the increase of her revenues, the advantages thus obtained. The sinews of war were thus afforded to the Spanish monarchy, and the activity and energy of Florida Blanca soon prepared means such as Spain had seldom witnessed for carrying on hostilities with effect.

It would seem, indeed, that the Spanish minister, with not very generous feelings, looked to the embarrassed state of England, with the ordinary expectation of obtaining some advantages as the purchase even of neutrality. A hint was given to the British ministry, that if Great Britain would give up Gibraltar, Spain might be induced to take no part against her. England, however, was too wise and too confident to consent, and no notice was taken of the suggestion.

In the mean time, with foresight, labour, and energetic activity, Florida Blanca carried his negotiations into almost every quarter of the world. With various Indian princes a communication had already been established under the administration of Grimaldi, for the purpose of diminishing the British power in the East, and Florida Blanca now continued eagerly to treat with Hyder Ally; the effect of which negotiations made themselves felt ere long. From the extreme south he turned to the extreme north, and threw out various suggestions calculated to destroy the good understanding which had previously existed between the courts of London and St. Petersburgh. He succeeded so far with the empress that he obtained, in the end, that famous result known by the name of the armed neutrality, and in the mean time engaged her to suspend her operations against the empire, and to mediate a peace, which enabled France to employ her undivided forces against Great Britain.

With Prussia and with Vienna also he treated, and although the ostensible hostility towards Great Britain was

on the part of France, far greater evils were rendered to this country, and far more dangerous steps taken against her by Florida Blanca, than by all the ministers of the court of Versailles. While thus employed in making great efforts for the cause of the allies in general, he did not neglect to pursue eagerly every means that could render war with England beneficial to Spain. In time of peace, as well as during preceding hostilities, England had continued to hold Gibraltar with a strong and tenacious hand, and there can be little doubt that the hope of recovering that important fortress had, on various occasions, been one of the chief inducements with Spain to take part with our enemies against us.

Hoping to signalise his administration by an event so gratifying to every Spaniard, as the capture of Gibraltar, Florida Blanca, while employing all his energies to increase the friends and diminish the enemies of France, neglected nothing which could ensure the success of his efforts against that city; and it must be admitted, that no one who had preceded him ever displayed so much forethought, care, and activity, in attempting that object. Spain still possessed several posts on the coast of Barbary, and any assault made upon these by native powers would, of course, have interrupted or impeded the Spanish efforts against Gibraltar. An attack of that kind had very lately been made by the king of Morocco upon the fortress of Melilla; and it was evident that England might endeavour, in case of a breach between Spain and Great Britain, to rouse the Barbary states against the Spaniards.

In order to prevent any success from attending such efforts on the part of the English, Florida Blanca, before war was declared, carried on a long and skilful negotiation with the emperor of Morocco, who sent an ambassador to Madrid, in order to communicate with the Spanish minister. The exertions of Florida Blanca were crowned with the most complete success, and the emperor of Morocco was not only induced to enter into a treaty, by which he bound himself to remain at peace and amity

with Spain, to open his ports to Spanish vessels, and to show every favour to that country, but also deposited a part of his treasure in the hands of the Spanish government, as a security for the fulfilment of his engagements.

The conclusion of all these arrangements left Spain in the most favourable situation for undertaking a war in which she had ever been placed. Her adversary was already engaged with numerous and powerful enemies, with scarcely one friend amongst the states of Europe, at war with her own colonies in America, and having to defend, in India, an immense and difficult tract of country against the efforts of internal and external assailants. Spain, on the contrary, was at peace with every other power in Europe. Her territories in America were secured from attack on the side of Brazil by the treaty with Portugal. Her operations against Gibraltar were facilitated by her treaties with the Barbary princes; and while the other maritime states of Europe were bound to maintain a neutrality in the struggle that was about to take place between England and her enemies, the forces of France and Spain were united, and the revolt of America afforded a strong and important diversion to weaken the efforts of Great Britain in Europe.

Under these circumstances, with forty sail of the line ready to put to sea, with an army in a high state of preparation, and with considerable treasures brought from the New World with much greater facility since the connexion with Portugal, Spain entered upon the war, and the French and Spanish fleets uniting in the neighbourhood of Cadiz, sailed towards the British Channel, with a force of sixty-eight ships of the line, exclusive of frigates. The intention of the allies was to make a descent upon the English coast, and fifty thousand men had been collected on the shores of France for that purpose. But disputes and misunderstandings took place between the French and Spanish commanders; numerous mistakes were committed by both; and this

immense fleet, after spending many weeks in movements of no importance, put back into Brest in a shattered and debilitated state.

In the mean time, the proceedings of the Spanish court against Gibraltar were carried on with great activity. That fortress was blockaded by land and sea; and the deceitful conduct of Spain in regard to the mediation had thrown England so far off its guard, that the important post which we possessed in the peninsula had been left by no means in a condition fitted to withstand a long siege. The most rapid exertions, however, were made by England to remedy this error. Immense exertions took place in her dock-yards. Rodney was ordered to command the fleet in preparation; and finding that forty French sail of the line had been appointed to watch for him at Brest, while admiral Langara, with a considerable force maintained the blockade upon Gibraltar, he obtained the command of nearly the whole channel fleet, and set sail with twenty ships of the line, passing Brest before the French and Spanish armament had put to sea.

The blockading squadron had not remained off Gibraltar without any effort of Florida Blanca to increase its strength. A large re-enforcement was ordered to join it under the command of don Louis of Cordova; but storms intervened, the squadrons were prevented from uniting; Rodney encountered Langara off Cape St. Vincent, and cutting him off from his own coast, notwithstanding a tremendous gale upon a lee shore, completely defeated him, only four vessels escaping out of the whole Spanish fleet. It is but justice, however, to say that the British force was far superior to that of Spain, and that Langara, and every officer under his command, fought with a determination and vigour which did the highest honour to their country.*

* The father of him who writes these pages was, at that time, a midshipman on board the Invincible, commanded by captain Cornish, which was engaged with Langara during part of the action; and the gallant and determined resistance of the Spanish admiral, who would not strike till his ship was a mere wreck, made an impression which was never effaced amidst all the events of a long and varied life.

Gibraltar and Minorca were immediately relieved, and consternation and grief spread through the Spanish court. But Charles III. was of too generous a nature to attribute to Florida Blanca a disaster to prevent which that minister had taken every means that skill and foresight could devise. His disappointment and humiliation, however, induced him to determine upon refraining from any farther attempts of a great and comprehensive nature, and he gave positive commands that his fleets should remain in the Spanish seas. Admiral Solano was sent out to guard the Spanish colonies in America ; but Gaston and Cordova were kept upon the coasts of Spain, till an opportunity suddenly presented itself for striking a retaliating stroke at the British marine.

Too confident from the success which had attended Rodney's efforts, and imagining that the seas had been cleared of the enemies of Great Britain, the English ministry suffered the East and West India fleets to sail under the escort of nothing but a man-of-war and two frigates. The two fleets were to remain in company till they reached the Azores, and were then to separate for their several destinations. Florida Blanca received intimation of this rash proceeding ; but he met with obstacles in taking advantage of the temerity of his adversary, from the state of sullen timidity into which the late disaster had thrown his own sovereign. Charles pertinaciously adhered to his determination of not suffering the Spanish fleet to leave the coast, and it was with the very greatest difficulty that Florida Blanca persuaded the monarch to allow him to capture for Spain a convoy that was absolutely without defence. His unwilling consent was at length wrung from him, and Cordova and Gaston were despatched to intercept the British East and West India fleets at the Azores.

This operation was the most successful that Spain had undertaken for many years. The English fleets were encountered by the Spanish force before they separated ; the British line of battle ship and the two frigates effected their escape ; but of the convoy,

consisting of fifty-five vessels, there was not one which did not fall into the hands of the Spaniards. An immense quantity of merchandise, arms, ammunition, and clothing was thus taken by the Spaniards. The loss to Great Britain amounted to nearly two millions of money, and about two thousand men destined for the land service were taken prisoners, besides the crews of the vessels. Nothing could be more glorious or more gratifying to the minister, and his triumph had no abatement, inasmuch as during the whole of this transaction he was fulfilling the duties of the minister of marine, who was ill, as well as the functions of his own department.

Efforts were at the same time made in America for the conquest of Florida, and the Spanish arms were completely successful. But as in these transactions it is impossible to ascertain what share Florida Blanca had in the design or execution, we shall not enter into the particulars. To Florida Blanca, however, must be attributed entirely the design for surprising Minorca. The execution of it indeed was not so well conducted as the plan was formed; but the island was captured after a sharp struggle, and a great benefit accrued to Spain.

In the mean time, however, differences began to take place between the courts of Paris and Madrid; and through the court of Lisbon some opening was given for the commencement of a negotiation between Spain and Great Britain. In consequence of this opening, while new measures were taken for reducing Gibraltar, Florida Blanca employed his whole diplomatic skill to obtain from England the cession of that fortress as the price of the retreat of Spain from her alliance with the court of Versailles. The events of the famous siege of Gibraltar, and the destruction of the floating batteries of the Spaniards, are well known—events with which Florida Blanca had little to do, except in causing the siege to be continued, even after it was hopeless, for the purpose of carrying on the negotiation with England under favourable circumstances.

As the diplomatic relations between Spain and England had ceased, the communications of the two courts were transmitted through an Irish priest, of the name of Hussey, who negotiated with Mr. Cumberland, private secretary to Lord George Germain. Mr. Hussey had been attached to the mission of the Spanish embassy in London, and had remained after the recall of the ambassador. By his means, Florida Blanca intimated to the British court that the king of Spain was willing to treat; and Hussey was immediately sent over to Madrid, charged with vague instructions, for the purpose of forwarding the negotiation. This secret agent at once obtained admission to Florida Blanca, whom he found inclined to believe that the suggestion about the cession of Gibraltar, transmitted through the court of Lisbon, had been solely thrown out with a design to effect a breach between France and Spain. It was of course a great object with the cabinet of Great Britain to ascertain what were the real engagements between the courts of Madrid and Versailles; and the statement given by Cumberland himself of the means which Mr. Hussey employed to arrive at that knowledge forms a curious display of diplomatic manœuvring. The account, for which we are indebted to Mr. Coxe, is as follows: —

" Notwithstanding this impediment, Mr. Hussey faithfully persisted in the purposes of his undertaking, and in the course of a conversation with Florida Blanca, took occasion to probe him upon the supposed engagement of Spain with France, not to make peace without her participation and concurrence. The train took fire, as was intended. Piqued at the suggestion, the minister rushed into his cabinet, took out his papers, put them into Mr. Hussey's hand, declaring on his honour that those engagements contained the whole of what had been stipulated between the two allied courts, and that no part of them could, or ever should, bind Spain in the manner he suggested. She was free to make peace with England independently; but he doubted the sin-

cerity of the British cabinet, and added with emphasis, that Gibraltar must be, the indispensable basis of the negotiation."

Negotiations were now more formally commenced ; and the British cabinet determined upon giving up Gibraltar, upon the condition of receiving certain equivalents, in order to make that important sacrifice palatable to the nation. Whether these equivalents, taken in conjunction with the advantage to be derived from the secession of Spain from the enemies of Great Britain, and the various benefits likely to arise from a treaty of amity between the two countries, were or were not more than sufficient to compensate for what England was to give up, it is not necessary here to inquire. The ministers, even while determining amongst themselves upon the sacrifice proposed, maintained towards Mr. Hussey so reserved and dry a demeanour, that he was induced to believe his negotiation had entirely failed ; and we cannot but feel that he was not very well treated as an individual, though as a diplomatic precaution the reserve of the British ministers was necessary in some degree. That reserve, however, was carried to such excess that the negotiation had very nearly been broken off at once.

The success of Rodney at this time came opportunely to induce Spain not rashly to cut off all means of concluding a peace with England. Cumberland himself was at length empowered to proceed upon a secret commission into Spain, and communicate with Florida Blanca in person. The history of this part of the transaction is not unworthy of note, as affording an extraordinary example of the ignorance of almost all foreign nations regarding our national character, and of the false inferences continually drawn from a misappreciation of events taking place in England. Cumberland had succeeded to a certain extent in the object of his negotiation with Florida Blanca, and there is reason to believe that the sketch of a convention had absolutely been drawn out, when there arrived at Madrid various reports of the

famous "No popery riots," which took place in the middle of the year 1780. Florida Blanca became convinced that the government of Great Britain was on the eve of being overthrown, and he consequently refused, for a time, to treat any further with the agent of a ministry whose fall seemed to him decided.

The conferences between him and Cumberland were at length resumed, and the English envoy endeavoured to open a negotiation for a general peace. His efforts, however, were ineffectual. Florida Blanca had determined, it would seem, not to withdraw from the alliance with France, unless the cession of Gibraltar by England was made the basis of negotiation. This the British cabinet would not consent to, and Cumberland was recalled, after a stay of eight months in Spain.

These transactions had taken place while the operations which we have detailed were going on, and were, of course, affected by the various military events which occurred. One result, however, accrued from the appearance of an English envoy at the court of Spain ; which was, that France eagerly bestirred herself to carry on the war with vigour at every point where the Spanish interests were affected, and endeavoured thus to draw the bonds between the two courts more closely together. Great efforts were now determined against our West India islands ; but De Grasse was defeated by Rodney, and the only success which attended the arms of Spain was the capture of the Bahama Islands, which was accomplished with the greatest ease. Notwithstanding this partial success, the failure of the attack upon Gibraltar, the defeat of De Grasse, and the utter want of success attending almost all the French efforts, showed the two Continental powers opposed to England that the force of that country was by no means in the depressed state they had imagined.

England, on her part, however, was well disposed to enter into negotiations for peace. Various important reverses had occurred in America, which gave such force and vigour to the insurrection of the colonies, that

scarcely a hope remained of ever being able to reduce them again to subjection, especially if supported by any European power. The outcry which had been raised against the administration, both for entering into the war and for their conduct in pursuing it, had reached its highest pitch, and been aggravated by the capture of lord Cornwallis's army ; so that it became no longer possible for the ministry of lord North to carry on the business of the country.

The ministry of the marquis of Rockingham succeeded ; and, as they had always expressed the most earnest desire for peace, negotiations for that purpose were immediately opened at Paris. The anxiety, however, which the British ministers displayed to obtain a general pacification, had very nearly overthrown their efforts for that purpose. The claims of France became inordinate ; and Spain not only demanded the immediate cession of Gibraltar, but several other districts of the utmost importance to our trade. In order to quicken the decision of the English court, count d'Estaing was sent to Spain, and arranged with Florida Blanca a plan for combined operations against the English possessions in the West Indies ; which, could it have been carried into execution, would have annihilated our power in that part of the globe.

In the mean time, however, the death of the marquis of Rockingham produced another change in the British administration. Mr. Fox retired from office, and lord Shelburne was placed at the head of the government, having under him Mr. Pitt, then in the first rise of his political career. The negotiations were still carried on, and every thing was done on the part of England to avoid the cession of Gibraltar. Had France, Spain, and America, however, remained firmly united together, while Holland still refused to treat upon a separate basis, and the other powers of the north continued in a state of armed neutrality, there can be no doubt that Florida Blanca would have gained the object for which he struggled, and would have forced

England to cede that fortress, in the attack and defence of which so much blood and treasure had been expended.

The intrigues of the French minister, however, and the disunion which began to spread amongst the allies, weakened the powers of the whole, while England, united in purpose, notwithstanding all the declamations of the parliament, had less difficulty in conducting her share of the negotiation. From the first opening of the negotiation, Great Britain had offered to recognise the independence of America ; but the Americans naturally clung to their connection with France, till the English ministers were enabled to show them, not only that the French statesman Vergennes was labouring with both parties to prevent them from agreeing, but was actually tampering with the various states of America, for the purpose of weakening them, and keeping them in a sort of subjection to France. As soon as this was proved beyond a doubt, the American commissioners signed provisional articles of peace with England, and France and Spain found themselves in a situation much less favourable than at the beginning of the negotiation.

At the same time, the failure of the celebrated floating batteries employed against Gibraltar forced Florida Blanca to lower his tone, though the siege was still, as we have said, continued, for the purpose of intimidating England. A fleet of fifty ships also was collected, according to the plan arranged with d'Estaing, for farther proceedings in the West Indies ; and it would seem that lord Shelburne and his administration determined at length upon ceding to Spain a fortress which had been the cause of constant contention between the two countries. There is every reason to believe, however, that the French minister pursued, as usual in this respect, the same course of double-dealing that he had done in regard to America.

It is scarcely possible here to unravel all the intricate parts of the negotiation ; but it is clear that at the very time when preliminaries were drawn up, importing the cession of Gibraltar in consideration of receiv-

ing Porto Rico and Oran, Vergennes was negotiating secretly with the English government, and I have scarcely a doubt suffered the British ministry to perceive that France was by no means anxious that the proposed exchange should take place, and very probably held out some hopes that she would co-operate to reduce the demands of Spain. Impediments were thrown in the way of the sailing of the united French and Spanish armaments, notwithstanding the most pressing and anxious instances of Florida Blanca, who himself declares that he saw very great benefits to be gained by despatching the fleet at once, even if the treaty were signed the next day and peace restored. There can be no doubt that the Spanish minister reasonably entertained the most sanguine expectation that the preliminaries, which had been drawn up with the consent of the various governments, and which stipulated the cession of Gibraltar, would be signed at once. The king also was fully persuaded that such would be the case; and leaving the conclusion of the business in the hands of his skilful and active minister, the monarch set out for Aranjuez, expecting that the very next courier would bring him intelligence that Gibraltar was restored, and that, to use an expression of Louis XIV., he was master in his own house.

An outburst of popular feeling, however, which took place in England at the very mention of ceding a fortress which had been purchased by some of the best blood of the country, showed the English government that they could not carry such a measure. France encouraged them to retreat from their concessions; and instead of the desired intelligence, the courier, expected with so much anxiety, brought Florida Blanca the tidings that England would not agree to surrender the fortress. The decision was not, indeed, announced in these precise words; but France represented that Great Britain would not give up Gibraltar, except upon equivalents which would be burdensome to France itself; and the utmost energy of the cabinet of Versailles

was employed to induce the Spanish monarch and Florida Blanca to withdraw from the demand of Gibraltar as an indispensable article.

The most cogent argument which could be employed was the apparent design of France to abandon the interest of her ally ; and the apprehension of such an event, the evasions of France, when called upon to employ her forces farther against Great Britain, the voluntary offer of eastern Florida as well as western Florida, which latter district was all that Spain had demanded in that quarter, with the renunciation of the British claims upon Minorca, and a somewhat vague clause respecting the evacuation of all points possessed by England upon the Spanish continent of America, induced Florida Blanca to hesitate. At this juncture the French court pressed upon that of Spain the acceptance of the conditions proposed by England, in terms which could not be misunderstood, declaring those conditions to be just and reasonable, while at the same time England agreed to leave the question of Gibraltar open to be discussed upon some future occasion. Florida Blanca, seeing that his master was virtually abandoned by his ally, that America was removed from the field of contention, and that every thing might be lost, but little gained, by further resistance, reluctantly consented to the arrangement proposed, and the preliminaries were accordingly signed, on the 30th of January, 1783.

In the course of this war Spain had displayed energy, activity, and resources such as she had not brought into action for many years. She had held a distinguished part in the hostilities of the day ; she had contended, with some disadvantage, indeed, balanced by one great advantage, with Great Britain on her own peculiar element ; she had made immense and gallant exertions, which had very nearly been crowned with success, for the capture of Gibraltar ; she had subdued Minorca, and she had, in fact, both excited the surprise and gained the respect of neighbouring nations, who had long looked upon her

as nearly exhausted by bad governments and internal contentions. The advantages, also, which she derived from her exertions in the conclusion of the war were great. The whole of the fine tract of the two Floridas was restored or ceded to her. Minorca was retained, and an admission of rights in regard to the coasts of the bay of Mexico was wrung from the British negotiators, which left every prospect of accomplishing the same great object with England which had been already accomplished with Portugal ; namely, that of putting an end to the terrible contraband trade which was carried on in South America under cover of the settlements of other countries.

This peace, so advantageous to Spain, was scarcely less so to France ; but the British nation judged that the concessions of the ministry had been far too great, and Mr. Fox and lord North combined to drive lord Shelburne from the head of the government before the definitive treaty was concluded. The former statesman immediately announced that he would have nothing said in regard to the cession of Gibraltar, and the principal difficulties reduced themselves to the definition of the vague words, "The Spanish continent of America, and the tract of country which was to be cleared of its English settlers." A long and intricate negotiation ensued upon the subject, and Florida Blanca skilfully avoided entering into fresh hostilities with England, and yet obtained the reintegration of the large tract of country called the Mosquito coast, with the other territories of Spain in South America. Several other benefits of a commercial and financial nature are mentioned by Florida Blanca, in his account of his own ministry ; but the treaty was sufficiently distinguished from all others, to which Spain had been a party since the accession of the Bourbons by the solid territorial advantages obtained.

During the course of a long and arduous war, extending over a space of nearly five years, and during intricate and frequent negotiations, Florida Blanca had

exerted himself with indefatigable energy, not only to conduct the measures adopted in opposition to the enemy and in co-operation with his allies, but in forming and executing internal arrangements, of which we shall soon have to speak. These exertions had very greatly injured his health; and after having obtained rewards and honours of various kinds for the other persons who had brought the war to a successful termination, he demanded, as the only favour he required for himself, to be permitted to retire. The benefits accruing from his sagacity and activity were too evident to Charles III., however, to admit of his granting this request, and Florida Blanca was compelled, by order of his master, to continue in the execution of his functions.

His first act after the war was one well calculated to satisfy the people, even though their expectations of recovering Gibraltar were disappointed. All the extraordinary contributions which had been raised at the commencement of hostilities with England were immediately put an end to after the signature of the definitive treaty of peace.

We must now turn, however, to the internal regulations which we have mentioned, and which commenced by establishing a strict and effective police in the metropolis. Something had been done, it is true, in this respect, by preceding ministers, and count Aranda had effected a considerable improvement by the division of the city into sixty-four wards, each of which was superintended by a committee of the inhabitants. Eight of these wards formed a quarter, and each quarter was placed under a magistrate. I am not able to discover whether the general cleansing of the city had taken place previous to, or in the commencement of, the ministry of Florida Blanca, and he himself leaves it in some degree doubtful; but there can be no doubt that to him is to be attributed the endeavour, to use his own words, "to purify it morally and politically, from the idle vagabonds and voluntary mendicants, who, with their families,

formed a permanent seminary of delinquents and libertines."

His first effort was to put down mendicity, which was carried at that time to an extent in Madrid that is scarcely conceivable. One great encouragement to this evil was a habit of the kings of Spain, by which, both in their journeys and hunting parties, large sums were given away as alms to the various poor persons who followed the royal train. No sooner was a hunting party announced, than thousands of beggars rushed out into the fields to obtain their share of the royal bounty ; and, either wandering about, or returning in promiscuous crowds at night, went through scenes of depravity and vice equally lamentable and disgusting. Florida Blanca no sooner became aware of these facts, than he suggested to the king the necessity of putting a stop to the practice ; and it was arranged that the alms thus formerly distributed indiscriminately should be reserved to be applied to the relief of the real and ascertained poor of the places which the king visited.

At the same time, means were taken for housing the beggars, and providing for the swarms of poor children ; and a general superior junta of charity was formed, in order to superintend the measures adopted for these purposes, to assist the committees of the wards, and to apply to these beneficial objects such pious foundations and funds as could be justly turned into that course. At the same time, means were taken to enlarge and support the hospitals, the general workhouses, and other receptacles of the kind ; and an institution was established, having for its object to furnish employment, and moral and religious instruction to the prostitutes who swarmed in the capital, so as to reclaim them if possible. All these efforts of course required considerable expense, and that expense was supplied by what I find called by Florida Blanca, "charitable impositions," or in fact, a rate levied for the purpose, in addition to the large contributions of benevolent persons.

These impositions, though established for a particular

purpose, enabled the minister to do much more than probably he had at first contemplated, and apparently without very severely burdening the other classes of the people. The subject, however, is so very important to the best interests of humanity, that the variety of miscellaneous objects which Florida Blanca was enabled to accomplish by the means placed at his disposal, had better be related in his own words, to guard against any mistake. I shall therefore make no apology for extracting nearly two pages from his statement, in reference to these particular points.

“ Separately and independently of the general junta and committees, succour is granted to several thousands of respectable, honest, and modest persons, who are pressed by necessity, and concealed by decorum ; wives and widows of officers, of ministers, and others in employment ; younger sons and orphan daughters, their children and wives ; farmers' work men, traders and artisans, receive also daily assistance from the funds of the charitable imposition, which your majesty intrusted to my care.

“ All the committees of wards have vied in establishing schools for poor or forsaken girls, in which, besides the Christian doctrine and a good education, they are instructed in works proper for their sex, and in different branches of industry, which are considerably increased, and prove useful. The deputations of La Trinidad and St. Isidad weave ribands similar to those of France. In those of the Barrio de la Comadra and Mira del Rio, besides needlework, are made fine embroidery, with silk, gold, silver, and artificial flowers. Many hundred girls are taught in these schools ; clothes have been given to the needy, rewards to those who distinguished themselves in the public examinations, and portions to those who have married. For this purpose, extraordinary sums have been granted to the committees from the same charitable funds created by your majesty, and placed at my disposal. Poor and abandoned boys also receive a similar education, and

experience similar attention in training them up to the business of which they are capable. Some thousands reap this advantage from the cares of your majesty, as appears from the relations printed and published every three months.

“ The deputies assist artisans and labourers, who are in want of employment, and provide for the sick poor at their own houses, instead of sending them to the hospitals, where disgust and repugnance, delays in suffering themselves to be conveyed thither, the unwholesome air occasioned by numbers, and the want of particular assistance, cause the death of many, while those who recover, leave at last during their illness, their families enforced to beggary and corruption of morals. Measures are taken to remedy these evils, by the care of the committees, of which there are already twenty-four in the three quarters of the palace. St. Geronimo and Affligidos have regulations and assignments from your majesty for the expenses of attending the poor at their own houses. Expedients are adopted for regulating the rest.”

Such were the views of a most enlightened statesman ; and we have his own word that the effect of his measures during a long series of years was such as he wished and expected, not only in greatly improving the state of the metropolis, but in spreading, as examples, to the provinces and provincial towns, and ameliorating the condition of the lower classes throughout the whole country. One of the things which Florida Blanca laboured the most strenuously to promote, was the education of the people throughout Spain : a difficult task in a country where the national character and national religion both tended strongly to resist all innovations, and to cling to darkness in preference to light.

Let me not be misunderstood, as wishing to throw out accusations against the Roman catholic religion, having seen and known a remarkable instance, where, in a catholic country, the education of the lower classes

is carried on with a discrimination and energy which does the highest credit to every one connected with the system, and with a zeal, the only fault of which is, that it approaches to despotism.* I speak merely of a modification, I might perhaps say abuse, of the Roman catholic religion ; and it is a singular fact, that Spain was amongst the first countries in which national education was really treated as a science, and the essay of Campomanes, published before the matter had received one thousandth part of the attention which it has since attracted, is still a book full of very valuable suggestions. †

Various societies were formed throughout the kingdom for the purpose of educating and encouraging the poor ; agriculture, arts, and trades, were taught, and a number of schools of design were instituted before the year 1780, which scarcely exist in England in the year 1838. One institution established by the charitable society of Madrid, and that of various other places, was of a kind which has been found the most beneficial that it is possible to conceive wherever it has been adopted. This was called the *monte pio*, but must not be confounded at all with institutions under a similar name in other countries. The object of this institution was the same as that of the *Atelier de Charité*, of Ghent, — that is to say, to provide employment for the poor out of work. The Spanish institution was, I believe, originally designed for women, but a number of men were also assisted by it, and employment was furnished to a mul-

* I speak of Bavaria, where I was conducted through the different schools by some of the most enlightened members of the catholic church. I was suffered in every respect to make what inquiries I liked, and every facility was given for my acquiring information in my own way. With these means of satisfying myself, the result was a conviction — although I can never recognise the principle of compulsion in a system of national education, — that the catholics of Germany are not in any degree behind their protestant brethren, either in activity, zeal, or discrimination in the great and vital point of popular education.

† I am inclined to believe that this work was published before Florida Blanca was called to the Head of the administration. But I speak from mere recollection, not having the work by me, and not finding it mentioned in any catalogue I possess.

titude of both sexes, in spinning, weaving, printing, &c. The regulations affecting this institution were different, I believe, from those adopted in the *Atelier de Charité**, and the result was not so complete ; for in Ghent, at the expense of the 20,000 florins per annum, or thereabout — less than 2000*l.* — all traces of mendicity have been removed from that large town, and a number of poor, and otherwise unemployed people, varying from 800 in the winter to 400 in the summer, are furnished with work, receiving wages sufficient to support them with a tolerable degree of comfort.

Still the advantages resulting to Spain were immense, and other societies sprung up in every part of the kingdom, on the model of that of Madrid. The purpose of benefiting the poor was obviously a great and noble one ; and the object of diffusing a love of order and a spirit of industry amongst the lower classes, was well worthy of the most strenuous efforts of a great minister : but the few words in which Florida Blanca comments upon these societies and their results, in my opinion, do more to show how great and comprehensive his mind was, how extensive his views, and how philosophically benevolent his heart, than could have been done by any great wars undertaken and carried through successfully, or difficult negotiations conducted to a fortunate termination. I give them exactly as I find them ; for I find therein put forth, as results arrived at, some of the greatest objects for which a statesman could strive.

“ I do not say,” writes the minister, “ that all the societies have been equally useful and attentive ; but the greater part are so, and in general many advantages have arisen from *uniting the principal citizens, employing worthily the time of the clergy and nobility, and exciting in every class the desire of doing good for the service of the country.*”

Fully to appreciate the force of these words, we must

* See the account of this institution given by Mr. Auguste Voinin, in his most interesting work upon the city of Ghent.

remember the state of Spain before the administration of Florida Blanca, and look at it at the period when the streets were filled with every sort of foulness and ordure, and so thronged with beggars, that a passage could scarcely be forced among them.

In pursuing these measures, the Spanish clergy in general showed themselves most willing to co-operate with the minister, and the higher clergy especially dedicated a great part of their time and of their large incomes to the improvement of the places under their charge. Charity houses, hospitals, penitentiaries, and schools, sprung up throughout the whole country. It happened, however, that in order to meet a part of the expenses thus incurred, Florida Blanca was obliged to have recourse to a measure which alienated the affections of a great body of the clergy, and called up an outcry against his measures. This was the raising of what was termed a pious fund, by a tax upon the clergy. The ecclesiastical preferments having cure were not charged, but the others were ; and, even from Florida Blanca's own statement, it would seem that though the act was performed under the sanction of a papal brief, the regulations were such as admitted of great partiality in the distribution of the burden.

We exempt Florida Blanca from the imputation of a design of showing such partiality ; but it is evident that his regulations on this subject were not drawn up with the same care and foresight which he usually displayed. In general, however, the clergy, and especially those in the most elevated stations, were favourable to his government, and he on his part strenuously opposed the introduction of any of those harsh and sweeping measures, which Pombal had pursued in Portugal. At the same time, however, with that calm and tranquil discrimination which, with but few exceptions, characterised all his proceedings, he gradually introduced very many beneficial changes which were calculated, if they had been followed, to produce a gradual but complete reform in the church of Spain. The

privilege of *sanctuary*, that most abused of institutions, was restricted in every way, and the number of places which could afford such a refuge to criminals, was greatly reduced. Measures were taken for regulating the monastic institutions of the country, and correcting their tendency to increase ; and Florida Blanca also laboured diligently but prudently to diminish the authority of the church of Rome, in Spain, and to supply its place by the authority of the sovereign.

The most important of all steps in the ecclesiastical affairs of Spain, and the most difficult to be taken, was the attack upon the inquisition, which at the very period of Florida Blanca's entrance into office had proceeded against Olavide, a zealous servant of the crown, and pronounced upon him a severe punishment, though his life was spared. Florida Blanca did all that he could to mitigate the severity exercised towards Olavide ; and, fearless of the consequences himself, though prudent from consideration of popular prejudices, he, step by step, encroached upon the authority of the holy office, till at length, in 1784, he ventured to publish a decree, by which it was enacted, that no grandee or any person in the civil or military employment of the crown, could be subjected to a process without the express approbation of the king. From that moment the power of the inquisition, as a dangerous ecclesiastical tribunal, might be considered as at an end, till other events introduced a state of things which rendered nugatory all wise regulations of the past.

If Florida Blanca assailed in so successful a manner a tribunal which was calculated to dispense any thing but substantial justice, he did not fail to regulate and improve the general system for the administration of the laws throughout the land. As one great end in all such regulations, the prompt execution of justice was sought for, and there can be no doubt that it was an object of primary importance in the courts of Spain, where those delays which are absolutely necessary to the investigation of facts and the due application of law, were protracted

and increased to such a degree, as to be, if possible, worse than the absolute denial of justice itself. * One of Florida Blanca's peculiar qualities was the power of adopting and executing the schemes of other persons deprived of the parts which rendered them dangerous or detrimental. Thus, much of what he attempted in the reform of the courts of law may be found shadowed out in the proposals of former ministers, especially of Alberoni and Ripperda.

All the courts were commanded to make a monthly report of the cases before them, of the progress made therein, and of the cause of any delays that had occurred ; and, by an after edict, particular formularies and rules were ordered to be adopted in recording the causes before the courts, by which, at any time, the above particulars could be ascertained in a moment, should it be necessary, between the monthly reports. Great improvements were also introduced, having for their purpose to put an end to the multitude of appeals which were constantly taking place from one court to another. Precautions were adopted to guard against malicious proceedings, and to prevent courts of law from becoming the instruments of vindictive rancour ; and regulations were made to enable artisans and journeymen to recover with ease the amount of any wages due to them.

A number of miscellaneous improvements, also, are to be attributed to Florida Blanca, regarding a thousand different points of internal polity : wise laws were framed for the prevention of clandestine and imprudent marriages : general cemeteries were constructed, so as to remove from the interior of cities the dangerous evil of dispersed burying places : great and successful efforts were made to reclaim the gipsies who infested Spain, and who were driven by the contempt and hatred previously attached to their very name, to crimes and vices not natural to their character ; and, in short, it is impossible to contemplate this part of that statesman's administration, without feeling that his great anxiety was not to over-

throw and to destroy, but to improve and reform every institution, cultivating all the seeds of good to be found therein, and eradicating all the evil.

We must now turn, however, to another branch of his enterprises, a branch which he looked upon as infinitely important; although in this country and in these times, far less attention is paid to such objects of political endeavour than the most ordinary forethought would show to be needful. I speak of the cultivation of the arts and sciences; and we must never forget that one of the great objects proposed to himself by Florida Blanca was, in his own words, "to unite the principal citizens; to employ worthily the time of the clergy and nobility; and to excite in every class the desire of doing good for the service of the country." For this purpose Florida Blanca laboured eagerly in various ways; but in none, more directly, than by giving to the pursuits of science and literature those honours and rewards which are their due upon every consideration, but which they unfortunately so seldom obtain.

Previous to the ministry of Florida Blanca, a stigma was affixed in Spain to the exercise of any of the arts; and he points out in his statement, that this stigma afforded a pretext for remaining in idleness and vice to those who, with the title of nobles, were unwilling, notwithstanding their poverty, to apply themselves to active employment. From this unjust and evil load Florida Blanca relieved the arts by granting the right of holding hereditary nobility to scientific and literary men. At the same time every thing was done to raise and to enoble the arts. A multitude of persons were sent abroad and supported by the government, for the purpose of studying the scientific and literary institutions of other countries, and bringing home every improvement that could be met with from foreign lands: a botanical garden was laid out; a provisional establishment was formed for facilitating the study of chemistry; the improvement of medicine and surgery was eagerly sought; the aca-

emies of painting, engraving, and architecture, which had been founded under preceding ministers, were extended in sphere, and elevated by honours, rewards, and distinctions, showered upon them by Florida Blanca; and, for the purpose of affording a fitting building for the scientific societies of the capital, a splendid edifice of 700 feet in length was constructed, to render which magnificent and convenient the utmost efforts of the architectural art as then practised in Spain were employed.

As soon as this building was sufficiently advanced to admit of it, a fine collection of specimens of natural history, which the king and his minister had been busily engaged in forming, was conveyed thither, and certainly no means were wanting on the part of Florida Blanca to make the arts and sciences flourish in the capital of Spain. In the more mechanical arts the minister showed the same zeal. Immense numbers of artisans and mechanicians were invited from foreign countries, and great rewards bestowed on those who distinguished themselves. In all instances where machines or models thereof could be obtained, they were brought over to Spain, and persons were employed to be continually on the watch for improvements devised in other countries. Manufactories of a thousand articles which no one had ever dreamed of fabricating in Spain, or which had long ceased to be produced, were instituted and revived, and schools for learning handicraft arts were zealously patronised by the minister and the king.

Nor was agriculture by any means neglected: for to that science the minister gave a more than ordinary portion of his attention. One of the greatest difficulties attending the cultivation of the Spanish soil, notwithstanding its natural fertility, arises from the frequent droughts to which many districts of the country are subjected. To remedy this evil Florida Blanca applied himself with an energy which, in many instances, triumphed over nature herself. The famous canal of

Aragon, which had been commenced under the emperor Charles Vth, was carried on under the administration of Florida Blanca,¹ and, at the time of making his report, it had reached Saragossa, and was thence winding on towards the Mediterranean. This canal was not destined alone for the purposes of navigation, though such was its primary object. But it was so constructed as to afford the means of irrigating the country on either side of its course, and we find that it produced the greatest change in the agricultural prosperity of that part of Spain.

In the kingdom of Murcia also which had suffered considerably from drought, and which as the minister's birth-place he regarded with peculiar fondness, two enormous reservoirs were constructed for the purpose of reserving all the superfluous water which fell during the more rainy parts of the year; and dykes were constructed to enclose the mass of waters collected, of the enormous thickness of one hundred and fifty feet, fabricated of hewn stone, and clasped together with iron rods. The projected height of these gigantic walls was no less than two hundred and ten feet; and in Florida Blanca's own time, when they had only been carried up to about half the intended height, they contained more than twenty-four millions of cubic yards of water. To supply these reservoirs, required aqueducts, excavations, conduits, and other reservoirs, which were constructed with a labour and solidity that rivalled the most extraordinary efforts of Rome and ancient Egypt. "It may easily be conceived," says the minister himself, "what was the result of irrigation carried through on this scale, in soils producing like those of the Campo de Lorca, where the average return is a hundred for one."

Other canals and reservoirs were constructed in various parts of the empire; roads to different points upon the sea were drawn out and rendered as good as the nature of circumstances would admit; and towns were even built upon the sea coast, for the purpose of encouraging commerce, and supplying to the agriculturist the easy

means of disposing of his commodities. It would be impossible to enter into all the particulars of these magnificent transactions ; but it may be sufficient to say, that six considerable canals, destined both for irrigation and communication, were commenced or completed under the ministry of Florida Blanca ; and that 195 new leagues of road had been opened, more than 200 repaired, 322 new bridges had been erected, and forty-six repaired : besides a thousand collateral works of the utmost importance and the most beneficial effect.

Almost all these undertakings were conducted by Florida Blanca himself, and the expenses incurred were defrayed from various sources of revenue, placed at his disposal, totally independent of the ordinary accounts of the treasury. The establishment of diligences on various roads in Spain, and a regular system of posting on the principal routes, is also attributable to that minister. In all these undertakings Florida Blanca clearly and distinctly points out that he had various objects in view, of far greater importance than the mere constructing of roads and canals, or even of facilitating and increasing commerce : or, to speak more correctly indeed, he points out that he looked beyond the mere means to the magnificent object of improving the moral, intellectual, and social character of the nation ; and he pointed out that those very means which he did employ had this great advantage ; that every step taken not only brought him nearer to the goal, but even ensured him a certain portion of the prize itself ; so that whether wholly or only partially successful, his very efforts were sure to obtain a certain degree of that reward for which he struggled, namely, the improvement of the condition of the people.

His views on this subject, and the comprehensiveness of their character, induced him to do every thing that could be done for the embellishment of the towns, and for rendering the public works beautiful as well as useful. Madrid was infinitely improved as we have before said in point of cleanliness ; the streets were paved,

repaired and ornamented ; covered washing places were erected on the banks of the streams ; and public walks and other beneficial arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the people, gave a new face to the capital. Toledo, Burgos, Saragossa, Malaga, Barcelona, Pampluna, Segovia, Valladolid, Seville, Murcia, and Zamora, were improved in the greatest degree ; and the bridges, the sides of the roads, and the banks of the canals, all received such ornaments as the situation and circumstances permitted.

To these operations Florida Blanca attached the importance which is their due, when undertaken for a great and philosophical purpose, that of raising and improving the national character ; and, by the impress of fine objects, the possession of great national works, and familiarity with the elegancies of life, softening and refining the taste of the people ; stimulating to exertion both mental and corporeal ; and supplanting that ignorant pride which is the greatest impediment to amelioration, by that refined and patriotic pride in things achieved which is the strongest stimulant to great endeavours. He neglected not, however, the means, while contemplating the end ; and, in the facilities given to internal communication throughout Spain, he only took one step towards another in the same course : that other step was the improvement of commerce and the increase of productions ; and for this purpose he pursued every measure that suggested itself to his own mind or that had been seasonably suggested by others.

Of the latter class, was the establishment of a great national bank, which had been before proposed by Ripperda, but had been combined by that statesman with schemes which, if they did not render it absolutely impracticable, were calculated so greatly to alarm the timid as to cause a dangerous outcry against the whole design. The establishment of this bank, however, called the bank of San Carlos, was accomplished by Florida Blanca, notwithstanding great opposition, and even at a moment of excessive financial difficulty, which he skilfully took ad-

vantage of, for the purpose of inducing others to consent who, unless pressed by embarrassment, would have opposed the measure. All the particulars of this affair would occupy too much space in detail for the limits to which we are necessarily confined in a work like the present; but I must pause a moment upon the circumstances connected with the first proposal of the bank by Florida Blanca, in order that we may judge of the skill with which he availed himself of every circumstance to obtain the object in view.

During the course of his ministry he had frequently to contend with Don Miguel Musquiz, minister of finance, whose views differed considerably in many respects from his own. In the present instance, that minister was greatly embarrassed at the beginning of the war with England to supply the sums necessary for the probable expenses, and, after every other resource had been employed, paper money, bearing four per cent. interest, was established under the name of *Royal vales*, which notes were issued at first of no minor value than six hundred pesos, or about 107/. These vales, by an edict, received the value of money, and became a lawful tender in all transactions, except in retail trade, the payment of soldiers public salaries, &c., where the amount rendered them inconvenient. The number, however, at first issued, proved insufficient, and it was afterwards proposed in the council to have recourse to a new issue of vales of the value of three hundred pesos.

On this occasion, Florida Blanca immediately gave his opinion, that a fresh issue of notes of a smaller amount would so increase the doubts and apprehensions which the people already entertained regarding paper money, that dangerous consequences would ensue, unless some means were employed to afford the holders of such notes the opportunity of changing them at once into money, whenever they liked it, the tendency of which he showed would be at once to restore public confidence. For this purpose, he proposed that regulations should be made to prevent the vales being discounted by the holders

at any other place than the royal treasury, and to establish a chest of reduction, as he calls it, with some large sums of gold which had been brought from Portugal for the purpose of paying the vales at once, whenever they were presented to the government. He argued that the people, when they found that they could obtain gold for the vales on presentation, would at once perceive that the paper money was as valuable and more convenient than gold; that the system of discounting the notes at a loss would be abandoned; and the public credit established upon a firm and permanent basis.

The chest of reduction was, in fact, a national bank; but, after every thing had been arranged with the consent of the other ministers, Florida Blanca had the mortification to find that a private council of finance had been held without his knowledge, at which it was determined that a large amount of the vales should be issued without the chest of reduction. This measure involved the government in new embarrassments. Gold and silver became excessively scarce: those who possessed precious metals began immediately to trade in them, the paper money was decried both by the timid and the interested, and fell to twenty-two per cent. discount; the edict for compelling the notes to be received was resisted; innumerable suits took place in consequence in the courts of law; and the government contractors forced to receive these vales in payment, overwhelmed the king and council with petitions to indemnify them for the immense loss which they sustained. "All," says Florida Blanca, "was confusion and disorder," and the country was threatened with a national bankruptcy.

In this emergency, Florida Blanca, once more came forward with the distinct proposal of a national bank. Between three and four millions of money were raised for its capital, divided into one hundred and fifty thousand shares; and, as rapidly as possible its operations were commenced for the reduction of the vales and the discount of the bills of exchange. The plan for the regulations of the bank was arranged with a merchant, I

believe of French extraction, called Cabarrus; and though it was assailed by all those who had been making large fortunes by the depreciation of the vales, it succeeded completely in answering the purpose intended by Florida Blanca, and in a very few years, the paper money had so completely recovered its credit as to have shaken off all discount and to bear a premium.

Other efforts were made by Florida Blanca to free the Spanish nation from the tremendous and injudicious system of taxation and impost, which fettered every commercial relation in the country, impeded internal traffic, and discouraged exertion of every kind. I have noticed these obstructions to trade before, in the lives of Olivares, Alberoni, and Ripperda; and, though each of those ministers had done something to remove them, the progress made had been very small, as will be seen from the instance I am about to cite. Even before he was sent to Rome, while a member of one of the provincial juntas, Florida Blanca had laboured for this object, and he had succeeded in doing away one of the most iniquitous taxes under which the people of Catalonia laboured. In that province, a tax amounting to fifteen per cent. was levied upon almost every kind of manufacture, and was exacted with the utmost rigour. A piece of cloth in the loom, before the workman dared to commence his labour, was obliged to receive a leaden seal at the beginning, and when the cloth was completed, a leaden seal at the end, which seals were called *plomos de ramos*; and whenever he sold, if it were but a hands' breadth of the cloth, he was obliged to give notice to the *bollero*, or seal officer, who came and measured the cloth, attached a seal of wax to the end, and demanded fifteen per cent. upon the sale of whatever was wanting.

At the suggestion, it would seem, of Florida Blanca it was determined to relieve the Catalonians from this inquisitorial tax, supplying its place by an increase upon certain duties of entry in the custom-houses of the province. The customs of Catalonia were equalised with

those of Castile and Aragon, and by the increased trade which immediately took place after the removal of the *bolla*, the demand for materials was greatly increased; the trade of the principality became greater in every respect, the inhabitants more wealthy; and, with scarcely a perceptible augmentation of duty on entry, the customs by their increase and equalisation in a very few years doubled the amount of the tax repealed. From this experiment Florida Blanca drew materials for the foundation of a completely new system of duties and taxes. Into the particulars we cannot enter; but the general plan that he pursued may be explained very shortly, and in his own words. They are as follows: —

“ By this equalisation, as I said, we prepared for the formation of a general list of import duties, in which the imposts were lightened on all simple or primary materials, machines and other articles which might be useful to us, and encourage our industry; and prudently augmented on those goods which might weaken or ruin it, or injure our agriculture and commerce.”

The latter part of this system he carried out with strong determination, and he himself asserts, with very great success. I speak of protective duties; for he held that it was absolutely necessary to guard the artisans and manufacturers of Spain against a competition with foreign nations in those articles of production or manufacture, which any circumstances might render cheap and easy of production in other countries, and difficult and expensive in Spain. Every part of clothing, even to shirts, had been imported in the most immense quantities; the threads, ribands, ornaments, furniture, and utensils which were used in Spain, or exported to the Indies, were all brought from other countries; and, to put a stop to a system, which the minister declares prevented the poor women of Spain from even gaining by spinning sufficient to buy a coarse loaf, Florida Blanca

revived prohibitions, and enforced high duties upon all such articles as interfered with the exertion of Spanish industry.

The question is a very difficult one, and has since his day been viewed in a great many different lights ; but he himself declares distinctly that the result was most successful, and that those prohibitory duties being combined with an alleviation of other duties on imports which did not interfere with Spanish industry, and with the establishment of a free trade to the Indies, was so far from diminishing the revenue derived from the customs, that in a space of little more than ten years it had considerably more than doubled itself.

The opposition which he encountered in all these transactions was, of course, tremendous ; but more especially, in regard to the trade with the Indies, which had been previously a complete monopoly in the port of Cadiz. That trade was freed from its shackles ; and from Florida Blanca's own account, it would appear, that considerable inconveniences and evil results had been attributed to the measure ; the failure of a number of the great mercantile houses, and the glut of cheap and badly manufactured European goods in the Indian market, being amongst the principle bad effects said to have arisen in consequence. * In reply to this, the minister asserted that the failures had not taken place from opening the trade, but from the extravagance of the merchants, pointing to the same results in England where no innovations had taken place ; and, in regard to the glut of the market, he asserted that the goods were not bad, but only cheap ; and that their very abundance and cheapness produced increased consumption. These points might prove very interesting, if we had any means of judging between the minister and his opponents ; but such can hardly be arrived at ; and one fact is certain, that the measure adopted by Florida Blanca, in a remarkable short space of time, trebled the trade between Spain and the Indies, and more than doubled the revenue derived from the customs both in Europe

and the colonies.* Of this result there could be no doubt ; and on it the minister rested his claim to honour and gratitude.

Besides all these regulations, he followed up the removal of the *bolla* in Catalonia by a plan for commuting the taxes, called in Castile the *alcavala* and *millones*, two taxes of a similar kind to the *bolla* in Catalonia. The plan was not adopted in every respect, but great ameliorations were introduced. It seems indeed, from the manner in which Florida Blanca addresses Charles III. on the subject, that in all these efforts for relieving the labouring classes by a total removal of the great body of what we may call excise and municipal imposts, and supplying the deficiency of revenue by an income tax, he met with great opposition in the cabinet itself, though he does not expressly state that such was the case. Whether his proposed tax upon income, taking all circumstances into consideration, was or was not a good substitute for that which he removed, may be doubted ; but there can be no doubt, that in his desire to do away with all excise duties he followed the only true and legitimate principle of taxation, of which one of the fundamental maxims is, that the taxation of industry is vicious. No sane person can doubt that the labour of a state is in fact its wealth ; and, that he who as a lawgiver puts shackles of a pecuniary kind upon lawful exertion, does not alone take from the country the sum levied, but a tenfold sum yearly from 'the discouragements and impediments created.

Connected with the measures for the promotion of manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, was a great undertaking of a literary kind, which it is much to be regretted that the statesman did not remain to see completed. This was the formation of a grand geographical dictionary of Spain, in which the situation of

* Some of the Spanish writers estimate the increase much higher ; and one of them says, "Este decreto aumentó al cuadruplo las importaciones en America, y los retornos a once veces mas de lo que eran anter."

each place, even to the smallest hamlet in the Spanish dominions, with every statistical particular connected with it, was clearly ascertained and set down ; and those volumes which were published under the care of Florida Blanca afford a model of what such a statistical work ought really to be. If it were but for this one great undertaking, Florida Blanca would have deserved the gratitude of his country ; but still more did he deserve that gratitude for the object which he proposed to himself in the enterprise. In speaking of the dictionary, he informs the king that it was intended to contain " all that is necessary to enable your government to extend its care to the poorest and most remote subject, in the same manner as to the inhabitants of the metropolis and those nearest to your royal person."

Plans were also suggested by the minister himself, or received his countenance and support, for the improvement of the army and the navy, for the administration of the property of the Jesuits, and for the removal of many local inconveniences and impediments which retarded the advance of the country in the march of civilization. He also drew up an immense code of four hundred and forty-three articles, for the regulation of what is called the junta of state. That junta had been established previous to his administration, but had fallen into disuse towards the end of the war. Some disputes which took place in the cabinet between the chiefs of the different departments, led Florida Blanca to propose that the meetings of the junta should be held upon a regular plan, and for the consideration of specified objects. This junta, amongst its other functions, received the power of examining into and discussing the qualities of persons proposed for various situations, and of nominating for the king's approbation ; and, certainly, the tendency of the whole was to carry on the business of the state much more regularly and expeditioualy than before. We cannot help feeling, however, in this country, that the institution was a dangerous one, and might have been turned to very evil purposes ; but it was necessary

to mention this act as forming one of the many which the minister of whom we speak performed, with views, we sincerely believe, for the good of his country.

We have endeavoured to draw all these proceedings into one view, though they were carried on at various times and under different circumstances ; and we will now proceed to treat of the general course of events in Florida Blanca's political life. Private life he can scarcely be said to have had any, and the few events which occurred to vary it we shall notice hereafter. Scarcely had the signature of the definitive treaty of peace taken place with England, when the Spanish monarch began to regret having encouraged the British colonies in their separation from the mother country, and he had still greater cause to be sorry for that act before the year 1780 came to a conclusion. A census of the native population of Peru had been ordered to be taken, and it was supposed by the Indians that it was the intention of the government to impose a tax upon them. Great discontent arose ; tumults took place ; and the principal descendant of the ancient incas of Peru put himself at the head of the malecontents, defeated some small bodies of Spanish troops, and speedily found himself in command of 60,000 men. The first outbreak of the insurrection, however, was speedily suppressed ; but considerable bands of the natives kept possession of the mountains, and set all the efforts of Spain at defiance for some years. The revolt, indeed, was not of sufficient importance to justify our noticing it in this place, had it not been that the large body of troops which of necessity was maintained in America, increased the expenditure so much as to embarrass many of the proceedings of Florida Blanca.

One source of danger to the Spanish commerce, however, was removed about the same time by the efforts of the minister, who concluded a commercial treaty with the Porte, a power which had been constantly at enmity with Spain for centuries ; and some years after a treaty was also entered into with Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis, which se-

tured the Spanish commerce in the Mediterranean, though not till two unsuccessful attacks had been made upon Algiers by the united forces of Spain and Malta. The coasts of the Peninsula, which in former reigns had been nearly abandoned by the inhabitants, from a fear of the piratical descents, were peopled and cultivated, and the flag of Spain, so long excluded from the Levant, was now seen carrying on a brisk trade in that quarter.

One of the most important results, however, which took place from these negotiations was a collateral one. While Spain was busily negotiating at Constantinople, many of the other powers strongly opposed her proceedings, and endeavoured to thwart her views on principles of commercial jealousy. This was to be expected from England, but certainly not from France, who professed herself so devotedly the ally of the Spanish monarchy. It was nevertheless discovered that no power was making such efforts to frustrate the endeavours of Florida Blanca, and this combined with her conduct at the termination of the war, opened the eyes of the Spanish minister to the deceitful character of his ally. The consequences appeared at an after period ; but in the mean time a variety of other transactions occurred in which Florida Blanca had a principal share, and in which he showed his great diplomatic ability, by gaining that ascendancy over the court of Portugal which had long been sought in vain by the government of Spain.

The friendly co-operation of the two powers, which shared the peninsula, was of course an object eagerly to be desired, and which, if accomplished, could only be beneficial to both. With such views, Florida Blanca drew daily the bonds of union more closely with Portugal ; and, in order to insure the permanence of that union, he concluded a double marriage between the children of the Spanish monarch, with the son and daughter of the queen of Portugal. The eldest daughter of Charles III., named Charlotte, was married to the prince of the Brazils, heir apparent to the Portuguese crown ; and his third son, the infant Don Gabriel, was married to the infanta of

Portugal, Mariana Victoria. From these alliances, as well as from the previous authority which Spain had acquired in Portugal after the disgrace of Pombal, the king of Spain may be said, in all essential points, to have ruled the whole Peninsula, during the rest of the ministry of Florida Blanca.

The peace of Europe, however, did not remain long without being threatened with a new breach, in consequence of the changes which took place in the relations of England, France, Prussia, and Holland. In Prussia and Holland the French interest had lately been predominant, till the accession of Frederick William to the Prussian throne changed at once the views of that power, brought it over to the side of England, and at the same time, in consequence of that prince's connection with the house of Nassau, restored in Holland, both the British influence and the former constitution of the country which had been abrogated by the intrigues of France. The last mentioned power, irritated and disappointed, talked loudly of war, and made vast preparations, and Great Britain was not behind hand in taking steps to repel aggression.

At this period, Florida Blanca, warned by the excessive expenses of the preceding war, employed immense and extraordinary efforts for the purpose of diverting that evil. While he declared his willingness and readiness to fulfil all the stipulations of the family compact, and to support France if assailed, both by naval and military aid, he remonstrated vigorously and reasonably with both courts, on the folly of plunging Europe into fresh hostilities; and he supported in France by his strongest efforts the party which advocated the maintenance of peace. In these operations he was completely successful, and to his exertions may be greatly attributed the pacification of 1787.

The Spanish minister, however, was by no means so successful in dealing with Great Britain, in regard to a matter in which national jealousy and pride were concerned. This was in regard to the still sought

for cession of Gibraltar, and, upon this point, I am inclined to take a somewhat different view from Mr. Coxe, believing that Florida Blanca was chiefly influenced in framing the obstructions which he threw in the way of a favourable commercial treaty with Great Britain, by the hope of inducing England to cede Gibraltar for an equivalent, in order to obtain advantageous terms for her commerce with Spain and the Indies. He affected, it is true, to treat this question of commerce and the restrictive duties enforced by Spain, upon its own basis ; contended for the necessity of such restrictions abstractedly ; and declared that neither the king nor the people of Spain were inclined to concede so many advantages to England without any apparent return to Spain. At first he spoke plainly of the cession of Gibraltar, as a means of inducing the Spanish nation to comply ; but after a period, he ceased to mention that matter straightforwardly, still suffering, it seems to me, designedly, the object he had in view to be apparent throughout the irritating negotiations which succeeded from time to time.

While these discussions were pending, and while between France and Great Britain war was still probable, a convention was entered into by England and Spain, regarding the limits of the settlements on the bay of Honduras. This convention was highly favourable to Spain and unfavourable to England ; and it is clear that the Spanish minister skilfully took advantage of the threatening aspect of foreign affairs, to draw concessions from the British minister which would have been made at no other time. Nothing, however, of a commercial kind was obtained from Spain ; the prohibitory duties were still maintained by Florida Blanca ; and no arguments would make him believe that the admission of cheap English goods into Spain could have any other effect than that of ruining large classes of Spanish manufacturers, who were prevented by circumstances from producing the same articles at so low a price.

The equivalents offered by Great Britain in per-

mitting Spanish productions at a low rate of duty, and even the demonstration that such a course would infinitely increase the export of these productions, did not satisfy Florida Blanca that the benefits proceeding to one class of Spanish subjects would be sufficient to compensate for the evil inflicted upon others ; or,—and this was a point of much greater importance,—that the increase to whatever amount of the trade of Spain, in particular articles such as wine, brandy, cocoa, tobacco, &c., would justify a Spanish minister in rendering his country totally dependent upon Great Britain for a supply of an immense number of articles of chief necessity, which must inevitably have become the case—had he allowed a free entrance to those articles manufactured in England — by rendering similar articles manufactured in Spain unsaleable, in consequence of the higher price, and thereby putting an end to all attempts to produce them. Could he have insured that a permanent peace would have existed between Spain and England ; and that the interested views of no parties would ever be permitted to take advantage of national confidence ; he might, perhaps, have considered himself justified in extinguishing those branches of manufacture which could not compete with those of Great Britain, and the reciprocation of the peculiar productions of each country might have been beneficial to both ; but so long as he could have no such guarantee, he contended that he ought, by no means, to put his country at the mercy of Great Britain, even for such articles as clothing, linens, cottons, &c.

From day to day, and from year to year, the matter was discussed without any benefit. Perhaps a little commercial jealousy biassed the views of Florida Blanca in the business ; but at the same time it is necessary to observe that, as far as possible, he construed the terms of the family compact as unfavourable to French commerce, and repelled all the unjust claims that France was inclined to found upon that treaty. Disputes in regard to navigation also took place between

Spain and Holland, but were terminated successfully by the Spanish minister. The dark clouds, however, were now gathering over Europe from which burst forth that great political storm, the French revolution ; and never did any great event throw its shadow more strongly before it. The circumstances which produced it, we may have to treat of elsewhere, but the manner in which those circumstances affected Spain, is all that we have to attend to now.

It became necessary for the French monarch to plunge his country into external contentions, in order to turn the attention of his people from the hopeless ruin into which a long series of errors had plunged the government ; and, while his ministers were thus labouring to crush the sense of present difficulties by means which accumulated fresh ones, the people of France, struggling under the heavy impression that some change was absolutely necessary, were driven into the wildest schemes and most irrational theories in search of some change that might prove beneficial. The minds of men in that country became familiarised with the most extravagant notions ; and their passions sympathetically inflamed by the excitement of their imagination. This is one of the states most fertile in producing fanatical enthusiasm, and such was the result in France, only differing from any other kind of fanatical enthusiasm in being anarchical and irreligious in its character and tendencies.

The proceedings of the French ministers in seeking to plunge their country into contentions with other states was alarming to Florida Blanca, and their motives clear ; and the spirit which now like a pestilential disease raged in every part of France, was so contrary to his whole character, to his systematic advocacy of mild, gradual, and easy reforms, that he declared, on more than one occasion, that every established government should build up a wall of brass to

guard itself against the introduction of the moral disease under which France laboured. These convictions were not without their results on his conduct; and the recollection of the behaviour of the French ministers in regard to Turkey, was coupled with all the efforts of the court of Versailles to induce Russia and Austria to gain by violent, and, in some instances, unannounced aggressions, a preponderance in the east of Europe.

Detestation also of the political principles reigning in France, and apprehensions regarding the measures to which the bankrupt state of the government would drive the ministry, induced him, as a matter of course, to lean more favourably towards Great Britain; and he positively and distinctly refused to enter into the new alliance, proposed between Russia, Austria, France, and Spain, and left the three great continental powers to pursue their schemes, not only unaided, but strongly reprobated by Spain. He approved and signified openly his approval of the conduct of England; and, when France urged upon him the terms of the family compact, as an engagement for the two branches of the house of Bourbon to assist each other in war, he announced as an opinion by which he would abide, that he looked upon that treaty as merely defensive; and that though Spain would assist France with all her power, in case of aggression on the part of any of her adversaries, she would in no degree aid her ally in any ambitious efforts for aggrandisement, or unprovoked attacks upon other countries.

This, it is true, was a very different reading of the family compact from that which had been given before; but the circumstances of the two nations were completely changed; and though strongly opposed by the prejudices of the king in favour of his family, Florida Blanca now saw nothing in the court of France, but an insidious enemy clothed in the garments of friendship. His conduct was in conformity with these views,

and he maintained the peace of the country with dignity and propriety, in spite of the turbulent state into which the rest of Europe was plunged.

Nevertheless, it may easily be supposed, that such beneficial changes as he had wrought in the institutions of Spain, could not be effected without producing a host of enemies against the Spanish minister. Those enemies, for some time, wanted a head, till at length the return of Aranda from Paris not only furnished a chief to the faction opposed to the minister, but gave it a chief of vast powers and abilities, of considerable claims for services performed, incessant activity, fiery and intemperate zeal, and, to crown all, a thousand views and principles derived from the revolutionists of France. Aranda succeeded so far as to place two of his creatures in offices of importance. These were the general O'Reilly, and the marquis of Rubi, governor of Madrid. O'Reilly, although he had not greatly contributed to the glory of the Spanish arms, was constantly eager for war, and consequently was more strongly opposed to the pacific views of the minister than any other.

After proceeding in secret for some time, the movements of Aranda and his party became more apparent, and Florida Blanca, who was of an irritable temper, was assailed in every way that could annoy or wound him. His want of hereditary nobility; his frankness and even bluntness of manner; his warmth and eagerness in debate; and various measures which he had employed for the purpose of raising the lower orders somewhat to the detriment of the higher, as well as the steps which he had taken in regard to the majorates or entails of very small properties, had raised him up a host of enemies amongst all classes of the Spanish nobility; and while this powerful class opposed him, not in secret, Aranda, with all his skill and discrimination, assailed his political measures, and found or fabricated a thousand faults in his conduct.

Under these circumstances, with health declining, youth passed away, no inordinate ambition to make him cling to

office, and a sincere desire of tranquillity and peace, Florida Blanca once more entreated his royal master to allow him to retire ; but Charles III., with noble firmness, not only opposed his retirement, but took instant measures for putting a stop to the impediments thrown in the way of a minister in whom he had every confidence, and from whom he had derived such inestimable services. Rubi and O'Reilly were dismissed from office ; the faction of Aranda was silenced ; and the king replied to his faithful minister's request with one of the highest compliments that, perhaps, ever was paid by a sovereign to a subject : — “ You will not surely,” he said, “ abandon me in my declining age, but rather remain, that I may bequeath you as a legacy to my successor.”

Florida Blanca, however, mortified to be misunderstood and calumniated, drew up the famous statement, which he presented to the king in October 1788, as a vindication of his ministry. Though this statement also concluded with a request to be permitted to retire, the king still refused to comply, and solemnly affixed his approbation to the statement, and vouched for the truth of the facts contained in it. This, however, was one of the last acts of Charles III. king of Spain. He was now in his seventy-third year, and an inflammation of the lungs, caught in hunting, terminated his life in the same year. Every thing connected with the last words and actions of the monarch tends to show that, even to the end, he placed the fullest and most implicit confidence in his minister Florida Blanca. On his death-bed he recommended him most strenuously to his successor, and added the highest encomium on his character and administration.

All the recommendations of one who may be considered as the wisest and firmest of the Bourbon kings of Spain were not sufficient to obtain any permanent influence for Florida Blanca, with the unwise and unhappy Charles IV. For a time, indeed, the minister not only retained his power, but exerted himself most

vigorously and strenuously, to obtain for his new master that same uncontrolled authority which had been enjoyed, and nobly used by the preceding sovereign. His efforts for this purpose, and his previous dealings with the cortes, had gained him a great deal of odium; and his enemies of the faction of Aranda did not fail to take advantage of every new measure which the minister employed, to misrepresent it, and point the hatred of the people towards him.

Two persons, probably employed by Aranda himself, attacked the administration of Florida Blanca publicly in two vehement satires, but the authors were discovered in the persons of an Italian banker, named Salucci, and a diplomatist, named the marquis de Manca. Florida Blanca then laid his complaint before the king, and also addressed to him the same statement of his administration which he had laid before his father. Charles IV., though weak in the most lamentable degree, was naturally equitable in his disposition. By a royal decree he confirmed and approved the statement of Florida Blanca, declared it to be true, and left the punishment of the minister's assailants to the council, who proceeded against them, but Salucci, we are told, made his escape to his own country, and Manca was the only one who suffered even the punishment of imprisonment.

On this occasion, also, Florida Blanca besought the king to suffer him to resign; but Charles still remained attached to the friend and councillor of his father, and did not abandon him till the vices of his queen required that the virtuous and uncompromising minister should be removed from the court. The declaration of Charles IV. in favour of the minister, was made towards the end of the year 1789, and during the two years that followed, the chief occupation of Florida Blanca was to prevent the principles of the French revolutionists, who were now in full career for the destruction of the monarchy, from being introduced into Spain. Another affair in which he was engaged in the course of the year 1790, was an unfortunate dispute with England relative to the settlements

of Nootka Sound and of the islands of Cuadra and Vancouver. These disputes were carried to so high a pitch, that a considerable armament was fitted out, and placed under the command of the gallant Don Juan de Langura, for the purpose of vindicating what were considered the rights of Spain in America.

Negotiations, however, were in the mean time carried on with Great Britain; and, seeing that in all probability a general war was upon the eve of taking place, the English cabinet endeavoured by concession to disarm the animosity of Spain, well knowing that Florida Blanca was inclined to give zealous assistance to a nation adverse to the principles of the French revolution, unless driven by some more immediate interest to co-operate with those to whom he was opposed in every political doctrine. In this affair, the minister certainly maintained the honour of Spain with dignity and firmness. The object of contention, indeed, was a mere trifle, as far as it regarded England, the quarrel being solely, as a Spanish writer has called it, "por algunos centenares de pieles," or, according to the version of a member of the house of commons, concerning a few cat skins. But with Spain the matter was different; for, with her, the question was whether settlements had not been made upon her territories, contrary to treaty. England, however, agreed to compromise the matter, and the handful of cat skins are said to have cost this country three millions of money, though of course there was a good deal of exaggeration in that statement.

In the mean time the life and the power of Florida Blanca were equally in danger. The strenuous opposition which he had shown to the principles of the French revolution, had caused vast efforts to be made to work his downfall by French agents at the Spanish court; but not contented with diplomatic intrigue, one at least of the French residents at Madrid determined to put an end to the minister's political career with his existence. The particulars of the attack I do not know, but I find it placed by the Spanish writer, in whose work I find it mention-

ed, in the end of the year 1790. In speaking of the attempt at assassination, he says, " In effect the assassin wounded him. The criminal was taken, tried, and condemned to death ; and as he was a Frenchman, it was generally believed, that this base attempt was the work of the French revolutionists." In the account of the life of Florida Blanca, by M. Bocous, the assassin is said to have been a French surgeon ; but whether he was executed or not, is left in doubt.

Previous to this time, an illness with which the minister was attacked, had given reason to believe that his life had been attempted by the means of slow poison, and by the order of his physicians, he had confined himself for several years to farinaceous food. In regard to the last mentioned attempt reasonable doubts may very well be entertained ; but of the attack upon him by the French surgeon, there can be no question.

The political cabals against the minister at length proved more successful than the attempt upon his life ; but notwithstanding all the weakness of Charles IV. and the number of the minister's enemies, it is probable that they would not have succeeded against him, had not the bad passions of a woman combined with the blind folly of her husband to give them effect. It was at this time that the rise of the notorious Godoy occurred ; and, as Florida Blanca was not at all of a character to tolerate the upstart insolence of the queen's paramour, that vicious woman put herself at the head of his enemies, and left no means unemployed to overcome the reluctance of her husband, and banished the free-spoken minister from the court. In the first instance, in order to destroy the power of Florida Blanca, his old opponent Aranda was recalled to take a share in state affairs ; and a considerable number of his adherents were admitted to power.

This was but a cloak for the queen's purposes in favour of Godoy. Aranda was but little more her favourite than Florida Blanca ; but she well knew, that

to dismiss a minister who had conferred such benefits on the state, for the purpose of giving his place to an upstart with scarcely one good quality to recommend him, would create an outcry through all Europe which must have an effect even upon her husband himself, blind and foolish as he was. The fiery disputes of Aranda with Florida Blanca soon afforded a pretext for dismissing the latter ; and the nation, admiring the talents and vigour of Aranda, were by no means ill pleased to see him replace a minister whom as yet they did not fully appreciate.

Florida Blanca was then dismissed from the government, and retired to his native place of Murcia, in consequence of an order from the court to that effect. He was subsequently arrested and placed for a short time in confinement at Pampeluna ; but was quickly set at liberty again, and retired to Lorca, where, on his own estate, he passed almost the whole of the rest of his life. In the year 1808, indeed, he was called for a short time from his retirement, on the invasion of Spain by the French troops, and being appointed one of the members of the central junta, exerted the feeble remains of his once powerful energies for the benefit of his country. He was now in his seventy-eighth year however ; his health had long been declining ; and, though his intellect remained clear, activity either of mind or of body was no longer his. The labour was too much for him ; and the disappointment of his hopes of regenerating Spain might contribute, with bodily fatigue and over exertion, to extinguish the last spark of life that remained. Following the fortunes of his country, he had retired to Seville ; and in the beginning of November 1808 he was seized with an illness which put an end to his existence on the 20th of that month.

In the account that we have given of the administration of Florida Blanca, we have very much followed, as far as materials go, the statement which he laid before his sovereign, and which was vouched to be true by two monarchs, who both possessed, in a very high de-

gree, the quality of sincerity, and who both had the best opportunity to ascertain the verity of the assertions which they pronounced to be facts. That statement is a great and magnificent political document, as far excelling the papers called the political testaments of Richelieu and Mazarin in greatness of views, clearness of statements, and accuracy of details, as it does in authenticity. It may have been a little highly coloured it is true: there may be in it a certain portion of natural vanity, a certain portion of prejudice; but no one can read it, remembering the circumstances in which it was written, and the sanction it received, without being fully convinced, that in all material points it is perfectly accurate.

In his private character Florida Blanca was amiable and gentle, though somewhat hasty; easy of access, and humble in his demeanour towards those of inferior station, though severe and haughty to the grandes and higher nobles of Spain. He was indefatigable in his application to business, and thereby produced a state of health which was probably mistaken for the effects of slow poison. He devoted his whole time and attention to the affairs of state, indulging in no recreations of any kind, except indeed in the occasional gratification of a high and cultivated taste for the arts. To see and admire a fine picture, to lay out the plan of a fine building, or to listen for an hour, as was the case almost every night, to the musicians of the king's band, who performed an evening concert at his house, were his sole relaxations.

Very different in all his habits from Pombal, he was abstemious even to excess; plain in his food, simple in his manner of life; and showing no desire for honour or splendour, except for the honour of benefiting his country and the splendour of a great and beneficent name. It was with the utmost difficulty that the king prevailed upon him, on any occasion, to receive those distinctions which had been eagerly coveted by all former ministers, and which he himself frequently solicited for other servants of the state. Even on the occasion of the marriage of

don Gabriel with the infanta of Portugal, when every person who was connected with the transaction received high decorations and honours, Florida Blanca and his nephew, the one of whom devised and carried through the whole negotiation, and the other was sent to meet the princess, were the only persons who neither received nor sought any dignity as a reward. It is true that he placed several of his relations in high diplomatic and political situations ; but it may be safely denied that Florida Blanca sought, with any degree of greediness whatsoever, to raise his family beyond its merits.

His father, we are told, though I am not sure of the accuracy of the statement, lived to see his son prime minister ; and, having abandoned his original profession and devoted himself to the church, was pressed eagerly by the court to accept a bishopric or some other rich preferment, but constantly refused to do so, contenting himself with the small and poor benefice with which he had originally set out in his ecclesiastical career. If the tale be true, it only shows the similarity of character which existed between father and son ; for there can be no doubt that Florida Blanca not only neglected to obtain for himself the immense personal recompences which he might easily have commanded, but refused many of those which were eagerly pressed upon him by the king.

His attachment to his relations, which has unjustly been made a reproach to him, was part of a character full of fine and kindly feelings, of which another trait was his persevering gratitude towards those who at any time had shown him kindness or given him assistance. Of these we shall give two instances, where the benefit conferred upon him was at two very different periods of his career. The son of an innkeeper at Valdemoro, of the name of Lerena, although apprenticed to a blacksmith, had displayed very considerable talents and abilities, and having married a woman of superior fortune, obtained the post of Alcalde, I believe, at Cuença. In this capacity while

Florida Blanca was in an inferior station, the magistrate received him into his house, treated him with great kindness, and displayed in their communication such talents as caught the attention of the future minister. When raised to the highest office in the state, Florida Blanca did not forget Pedro Lerena, but brought him to Madrid, raised him from one station to another, tried his abilities in the commissariate department during the war with England, gave him the intendance of Andalusia, and in the end, having created him marquis of Lerena, he placed him, after the death of the famous marquis of Sonora, in the important office of minister of finance. In the other instance Florida Blanca's gratitude was shown towards the person who, by calling the attention of Grimaldi to him, had, in fact, obtained for him the post of minister. After conferring various other favours upon Del Campo, who we may remember was Grimaldi's chief clerk, he bestowed upon him the important office of ambassador to the court of London, with which the relations of Spain were becoming daily more complicated and of more immediate consequence.

The minister of whom we speak was, perhaps, greater even as an administrator than as a diplomatist, although in the course of his government he certainly effected a number of treaties more advantageous to Spain than those which any other Spanish state-man had ever concluded. Of this fact the treaties with Portugal and with England are the principal instances, though his negotiations and treaties with the northern powers might also be brought forward as displaying great diplomatic skill. Nor were his negotiations, even before he became minister of state, insignificant or unimportant; and, in dealing with the wily court of Rome, in arranging its differences with Spain, France, Naples, and Parma, in settling the difficult questions which agitated Venice, and in procuring the election of cardinal Braschi, afterwards Pius VI., he displayed consummate skill and prudence.

The moral character of Florida Blanca stood extremely high: no vices marked his career as a private man; and even those who were engaged in opposition to him in the difficult transactions of the time, acknowledged that nothing could induce him to advance a false position, even to gain the greatest advantage, or to deviate from his engagements for any consideration. He never married; and in his retreat at Lorca, till called from it by the invasion of Spain, he employed that leisure, which he had never before known, in those pleasures which he was so well calculated to enjoy, the cultivation and exercise of a fine taste, and the pursuit of rural and agricultural experiments.

We cannot conclude this sketch without pointing out two great mistakes which have been committed by the French biographers of Florida Blanca, both of which tend to throw some discredit upon his ministry. His French biographers have attributed to him the ineffectual and disastrous attempt upon Algiers in the year 1775; but with that attempt he had nothing to do whatsoever, it having been entirely planned and executed by Grimaldi and O'Reilly. The biographers to whom we allude, increased their own error by placing this attempt upon the Barbary States in 1777, during which year we find no mention of any fact of the kind whatsoever, and certainly no attack upon Algiers under the command of O'Reilly, which they particularly mark was the case in the expedition they mention. The second error is, that Florida Blanca maintained O'Reilly in favour during his whole life, notwithstanding the discontent of the people. This is quite imaginary. It is, certainly, by no means impossible that Florida Blanca might think that the people treated O'Reilly unjustly in attributing to him the failure of the Spanish arms in Africa, and that he would not suffer him to be persecuted; but O'Reilly was any thing but in favour with the minister, being attached to the faction which constantly opposed him, and ultimately dismissed and sent from Madrid in consequence of his persevering enmity towards Florida Blanca.

STEPHEN FRANCIS, DUKE OF CHOISEUL.

BORN JUNE 1719, DIED MAY 1785.

ALTHOUGH the duke of Choiseul was, in his day celebrated as a statesman, and his acts not only affected the country in which he lived, but the whole of Europe, yet as we have just given the lives of two ministers, in which the principal political events of the time have been largely noticed, we shall now confine our account of Choiseul to the occurrences affecting his private life, and those which immediately interested France, and prepared the way for that awful termination of a long series of errors, which we shall have to notice in speaking of Necker.

The minister, of whose history we now propose to give a brief sketch, entered life with every advantage. Endowed with considerable talents, brave to a fault, and educated with care and attention, he entered the service of his native country early as the Count de Stainville, and rapidly distinguished himself in the war which terminated the administration of Fleury. In the army he made himself very generally liked; and although undoubtedly of an eager and aspiring nature, his efforts for his own advancement were pursued without raising up enemies against him. His high character, his noble race, the talents that he displayed, and the ambition with which he was inspired, all offered, from the very first, the highest prospect of success in whatever career he selected for himself; and we find that at the age of forty he had reached the station in the army of Lieutenant-general.

His own fortune, which was considerable, had been greatly increased by his marriage with a rich heiress; and it would seem that, notwithstanding the abilities

which he had displayed as a soldier, he had become tired of a military life before he reached the highest grade in the service, and had turned all his attention and efforts to the attainment of a post in the administration. The measures which he took to effect that object have been variously stated ; but it can hardly be doubted, that the duke was not very scrupulous as to the means. His intimacy however with the celebrated madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV., was undoubtedly the first step to his elevation. To ascertain how her favour was obtained, and upon what principles or motives he continued throughout his life to retain it, would lead us into details which are unpleasant in themselves, and not suited to this work.

By some he is accused of having made criminal love the handmaid of ambition, and of having taken advantage of madame de Pompadour's weakness for himself, to use her interest in his favour with the king. Others, again, state the matter more favourably, and declare that the act which acquired for him madame de Pompadour's regard, and secured it to him for life, was one which was calculated to call upon his head all the indignation of the debauched and tyrannical monarch whose minister he aspired to become. It was the instant removal of a young and weak female relation from the seductions of the monarch, and consequently the deliverance of madame de Pompadour from the unpleasant presence of a rival younger than herself. We must not attempt to investigate which of these two versions is correct. It is sufficient perhaps to say, that, notwithstanding his ugliness, scandal did not altogether spare the intimacy of the count de Stainville and madame de Pompadour, and that yet there seems to have been little difficulty in recommending him to the notice and attention of Louis XV.

Before he arrived at the post of minister, however, Choiseul was employed in various diplomatic affairs, in which he displayed fully sufficient genius to justify

the recommendations of the king's mistress ; and we find that in the year 1759 he was sent to Rome, which was at that time a post of very high importance. The troubles which had existed for so many years in the religious world of France, in regard to the famous bull, known by the name of the Bull Unigenitus, had caused so many disastrous occurrences, that Louis XV. was extremely anxious to put an end to such disputes upon the subject ; and such was the chief object entrusted to the care of Stainville, who set out for Rome immediately on the recall of the duke of Nivernois. He was accompanied by his wife, and by the famous abbé Barthelemy, for whom he showed the noblest and most disinterested friendship through life. The new ambassador proved much more successful than his predecessor, and seems to have gained entirely the regard of Benedict XIV., who suffered himself to be guided in a very great degree by the counsels and suggestions of the French minister.

In the mean while, the duke of Nivernois had been despatched to the court of Prussia, in order to impede, as far as possible, the negotiations which were taking place in that quarter between the king of England and Frederic the Great. He arrived too late for his purpose, however, and the treaty between the two powers, which had been determined before he appeared, was signed notwithstanding his presence. The haste with which Prussia and England had entered into alliance with each other, and the various differences which actually existed between Great Britain and France, gave every reason to believe that a general war was upon the eve of breaking out. The empress queen, anxious to recover the territories in Silesia which the king of Prussia had torn from her, gladly saw him form an alliance which might call upon him the indignation of France, and her minister at the court of Louis XV. urged eagerly the necessity of France and the empire uniting for their common safety.

Staremburg, in the name of the empress, proposed a

scheme so advantageous to France, that scarcely any objection could be found against it, except the complete change which it introduced into the political system of the latter country, and the apprehension which all old diplomatists feel at entering into such long and complicated negotiations and relations with other countries as would have been necessary to carry the scheme of the empress into effect. For the purpose, it would seem, of familiarising themselves with the strange diplomatic changes proposed, the French ministers paused and hesitated, saying that they would take time, to watch the proceedings of Prussia and England.

But the empress, not contented with such an unsatisfactory reply, demanded that, if they refused her proposal, and still desired her alliance, they should suggest some other scheme. The count de Bernis, who, though not yet in the ministry, conducted the whole negotiation with Staremburg, now proposed a treaty of mutual guarantee between the several great continental powers, including Russia, but excluding England; but this timid and empty suggestion was ultimately rejected by the empress, who demanded as a condition that the treaty should comprise a convention of neutrality for the Low Countries. Day by day, however, the intentions of the king of Prussia to support England in the war with France became manifest; and in order not to lose entirely the advantages which might be derived from the good-will of the empress, it became necessary to send some skilful negotiator to Vienna. The count de Bernis was proposed for the task in the first instance; but his elevation to the ministry having been already determined by Madame de Pompadour, the count de Stainville was selected for the important embassy to the imperial court.

A treaty was shortly after signed in France between the two courts, and France and Austria became united in the war, which had already begun by hostilities on the part of France and England. What part Choiseul had

in this treaty I do not fully know ; but the result was certainly little advantageous to France. In the mean time, the count de Bernis had been appointed minister for foreign affairs, and the hat of cardinal, which had been solicited and obtained for him by Stainville during his embassy at Rome *, afforded but a poor consolation for all the annoyances to which he was subjected during his brief ministry. Constant opposition, the rejection of his best schemes, and the adoption of his worst, wearied him out ; popular clamour was added ; and in the end Bernis demanded permission to resign.

In the mean time, Stainville had remained in Germany ; and no sooner had the cardinal de Bernis resigned his post as minister for foreign affairs than Stainville was called to fill his place. His favour both with the king and madame de Pompadour now rapidly increased, and he was immediately created peer of France. The death of the comte de Belle-isle left open, in the beginning of the year 1671, the post of minister at war, the functions of which were added to those already attributed to Choiseul ; and scarcely a year passed without being marked by some new favour to the minister—the elevation of his relations to power, and personal distinctions conferred upon himself. Thus, appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs in November, 1758 he was elevated to the peerage, and received as duke by the parliament in January of the following year ; his brother received the riband of the Holy Ghost in 1760 ; he was himself created secretary at war early in 1761, and was somewhere about the same time invested by the dauphin himself with the order of the Golden Fleece.

Nevertheless, during the whole of this time, while honours and rewards were showered with so profuse a hand upon the minister, the affairs of the nation were proceeding as unpropitiously as it is possible to conceive. The immense burthen of debt which had already accumulated, was daily increased ; the French arms were

* On this point I have differed from Ducas, though I think not upon insufficient authority.

unsuccessful, both by sea and land ; Canada was lost to France for ever, notwithstanding all the efforts of the famous Montcalm ; and though the arms of Austria obtained from time to time a glimmering of success, this was scarcely sufficient to compensate for her own reverses, and certainly not to counterbalance the disasters of France. Louis XV. saw himself compelled, much against his inclination, to seek for peace on any reasonable terms ; and so disastrous did the state of affairs appear at the beginning of the year 1761, that it became evident he must soon enter into some treaty with England, even if the empress could not be brought to negotiate conjointly with him.

The fear of being left alone to support the weight of the war induced the empress to profess a willingness to join the French monarch in seeking a general pacification. All the states around her pressed her eagerly to name some place for a congress, and she at length fixed upon Augsburg ; to which place the count of Choiseul, the brother of the duke, was appointed plenipotentiary in April, 1761.* Negotiations, however, had been already opened with England by the count de Bussy on the part of France ; and Choiseul, who found that it would be absolutely necessary — both in order to satisfy the people, who were clamouring for peace, and to afford even a hope of extricating the country from the lamentable state into which it had been plunged by the various extravagances of ambition, ostentation, luxury, and vice — to make some great sacrifices in order to obtain peace, offered conditions to England, which clearly admitted that France was hopeless of recovering by force of arms the advantages which she had lost.

England, on the contrary, was resolved to gain the utmost fruit from the success of her arms, and exacted conditions still more humiliating to the pride of France. In that very year, also, great advantages were obtained by Great Britain and Prussia. The energetic ministry of Pitt had

* I do not discover who was the count de Stainville, at this time mentioned by all writers as commanding a part of the French army in Germany. Choiseul had no son.

seized the proper moment for supplying Prussia with the means of continuing the war with vigour. England no longer confined her efforts to the seas and to America, but had plunged at once, and with surprising vigour, into a continental war. The king of Prussia, by his rapidity, combinations, perseverance, and success, deserved as a general the name of Great, which he had obtained as a king, and the French were defeated at all points, with a deduction of very few compensating advantages.

It was in this state of things that Choiseul had recourse to those negotiations, for the purpose of obtaining some further support for France in the disastrous state to which her affairs were reduced, which ended in a treaty famous in the annals of European diplomacy. One of the most vigorous and talented of the Bourbon kings of Spain, Charles III., had lately succeeded to the crown of that country. He came to the throne, as we have before said, with considerable abilities, and—what was still better perhaps, circumstanced as he was—with considerable experience in the habit of ruling, having governed Naples before he was called to govern Spain. But he possessed, at the same time, all that fondness for his family which characterised the descendants of Philip V.; and although he had abstained from entering at first into the war between France and England, Choiseul clearly saw that it would be no difficult matter to engage him more closely in support of France.

The French minister, therefore, busily negotiated with the court of Madrid for that purpose; and even in the proposals made by France to England, in July, 1761, the affairs of Spain were insidiously mingled up with those of the court of France, by the consent of the former power. This was done in the most artful manner, so as to widen any difference that might exist between Spain and England, and to put forth France and Spain as intimately united with each other. Mr. Pitt had refused to suffer the affairs of Spain to be thus mixed up with those of France, and lord Bristol was authorised to make strong remonstrances

to the court of Spain on the course of proceeding which she had suffered France to adopt. In the mean time, however, the French diplomatists were pursuing their object with skill and success ; every difficulty was removed ; and by Choiseul's dexterity, activity, and perseverance, that famous treaty between France and Spain, known by the name of the Family Compact, was signed at Versailles, on the 15th of August, 1761.

This is the masterpiece of Choiseul's diplomatic ability ; for he not only gained assistance from Spain of an important kind in struggling with the enemy to whom he was actually opposed, but he also concluded a treaty with a friendly power, in which all the advantages were on the side of France. By this famous treaty, France and Spain, in all political transactions, became one country. Each guaranteed to the other the possession of their respective dominions in all parts of the world, and agreed to consider every power as the enemy of both which might become the enemy of either. A few vague words were inserted, restraining the execution of some parts of the treaty to the period subsequent to the conclusion of a peace ; and Spain stipulated not to be required to furnish aid to France in her German wars, unless some maritime power should take part in those wars : but it will easily be perceived that the first reservation was empty, and subjected to infraction at any moment, while the stipulation regarding the German wars was absolutely null, not only from the fact of maritime powers being already engaged therein, but because there was no probability whatsoever of such wars ever taking place without the intervention of one of the maritime powers.

Other clauses were added to the treaty, to secure the perfect union of the two countries in every point except that of civil government ; and it was expressly stipulated that the subjects of each crown were to enjoy the same rights, privileges, and immunities in the European territories of the other as native subjects. It was clear that this treaty would be principally advantageous to

France ; and though a clause was added to exclude all other princes from a participation in the treaty, except those of the Bourbon race, Choiseul, as we have shown elsewhere, eagerly endeavoured to force Portugal into the alliance, in order to have the complete command of the Peninsula. The failure of this attempt in regard to Portugal was owing to the wisdom and foresight of Pombal. But the success of Choiseul's measures with regard to Spain was quite sufficient to repay him for the labour and difficulty he had encountered.

The results of that success were rendered even greater than they otherwise would have been by the blind hesitation of a great part of the British cabinet. Though kept profoundly secret by the two courts, the negotiation of the Family Compact was suffered to transpire by the indiscretion of some of the inferior agents. Rumours of the proceeding became ripe in England ; the tone of triumph assumed by France in the midst of her disasters confirmed the supposition that some advantageous arrangement had been concluded, and the armaments carried eagerly forward in the ports of Spain directed attention to that country. Mr. Pitt, afterwards Lord Chatham, at once conceived the nature of the arrangement that had taken place, and, at the same time, his genius devised the means of frustrating the purposes of France, and of inflicting upon Spain a punishment for her impolitic and unreasonable conduct.

He proposed, immediately to deal with Spain as if the compact were actually known, and war decided. But the great majority of his colleagues in office, alarmed at the firm and determined nature of his proposal, would not consent to those measures being taken, which would have commenced the war on the part of England with the most extraordinary advantages, which would have crippled on the outset the efforts of Spain by cutting off her resources, and which would have still further distressed France by elevating still further the position of her enemy. Pitt immediately resigned, and the earl of Egremont succeeded, conducting,

under the directions of lord Bute, those slow and timid negotiations which afforded time to Spain to receive her treasure, to mature her preparations, and to take advantage of every favourable circumstance in a war already determined in her councils.

That war was declared publicly in December of the same year, and Charles III., well pleased with the alliance into which he had been led by Choiseul, conferred upon that minister the rank of grandee. These acts were followed by an immediate attack upon Portugal. But the Spanish arms were unsuccessful in her aggression upon the ally of Great Britain, and the English fleets and armies assailed with success the transatlantic possessions of the Spanish crown. Cuba was immediately invaded, the Havanna taken, after a desperate attack and defence; sir William Draper made himself master of Manilla, and the only compensation which Spain received, was the capture of Sacramento, of which she deprived Portugal. All these reverses, of course, rendered the situation of France more terrible by the depression of her ally. The trade of the country was ruined, the finances were in a state of the most terrible dilapidation; the French arms had become contemptible, even in the eyes of a nation, whose vanity is always disposed to gild even reverses with its own sunshine; and all the evil results of a war which he had not commenced, the embarrassment of the state, the desolation of the country, the distress of the people, and the errors of sordid and incapable generals; even the effects of winds and storms, and disease and death, were attributed to Choiseul; so that, probably, no minister was ever more distinguished by the unjust outcry of his opponents than himself at this period.

The only hope of recovering popularity, and, indeed, the only hope of saving the country, was found in the changes of the British administration. But the chance of obtaining peace upon reasonable terms was diminished by the death of the empress of Russia. The weakness, however, as well as the pacific dispo-

sition of lord Bute, and, it would seem, a distaste on his part towards the Prussian alliance of England, compensated for all. The Bourbon courts of France and Spain eagerly pressed for peace; the court of St. James's met them more than half-way; Choiseul despatched the duke of Nivernois to London, and received the duke of Bedford in Paris, and England showed as much disposition to abandon Prussia to its fate, as France did to neglect the cause of the house of Austria. Under these circumstances, a definitive treaty of peace was soon drawn up, and signed in Paris on the 10th of February, 1763, by which France and Spain made the most immense sacrifices without any compensation whatever, and paid, as the price of peace, a severe penalty for having plunged into an unjust war.

The famous Family Compact still continued unshaken between France and Spain, remaining a great and noble monument of Choiseul's political abilities. But while these events had been taking place, that minister had been engaged in another transaction of the most important character, affecting the interests of all Europe, though apparently confined to the internal regulation of France. This was the expulsion of the Jesuits.

For a considerable time, that body had been subjected to the most furious attacks from many of the most influential men in France. By a strange and curious combination, which at first sight would seem to show that something very dangerous must have existed in the institution, various bodies of men, of the most opposite characters, views, purposes, and principles, were united in striving for the destruction of a society, learned, pious, and moral. The infidel, the sceptic, the libertine, were joined with the pure, the devout, the fanatical, in attempting to overthrow the institution of Loyola, and, day after day, new adversaries were added to the lists. Choiseul, even while ambassador at Rome, had sown his enmity to the order; and the whole body of the Jansenists, who were now

very numerous in France, displayed the peculiar perseverance of enthusiasm in labouring for its fall.

Every thing, in short, had been prepared in France for the destruction of the Jesuits, when an accidental circumstance brought the question between them and their assailants suddenly to issue, in a manner and upon a point where assault was least expected, and where they were least ready to defend themselves. The Jesuits, though by no means the rich company that was supposed, had engaged in commercial transactions, and one of their body, of the name of La Valette, carried on an immense trade between Martinique and Marseilles. The house that he corresponded with was that of Lionay and Gouffier, merchants of a considerable capital, upon whom he drew bills from Martinique, sending over vast quantities of merchandise in vessels from the West Indies.

On the breaking out of the war, several of these vessels were captured by British cruisers. The house of Lionay could not meet its obligations; and the transactions between them and the Jesuit La Valette were of course immediately made known. The creditors of the house of Lionay determined to sue the Jesuits as a commercial body, and they, too confident in their strength, attempted to evade payment, to screen themselves under their ecclesiastical character; and they even treated the attempt of the creditors with some sort of levity and contempt. It was at this moment, however, that they were in the very greatest danger; the proceedings against them in Portugal and in Spain had shaken the order to the foundation, the spirit of the country was raised against them most violently, and what was really wanting on their part to make them thoroughly detested by the French people, was supplied by the wit, the ingenuity, and the falsehood of their enemies.

The creditors of La Valette and Lionay proceeded with vigour and determination, brought their cause before the parliament of Paris, established in a manner

which scarcely admitted a doubt that the whole order formed one great company in the legal acceptation of the word, and that the general of the order ruled the property as well as the consciences of the individuals. The examination was carried on by the parliament of Paris with discrimination, firmness, and some party spirit. The constitution of the order, and internal regulations, were brought forward and made public; and the French parliament pronounced a decision against them, rendering the whole body responsible for the debt of La Valette.

The course of this trial produced an examination into the claims, doctrines, rights, and regulations of the whole body; and it was discovered, much to the surprise of most people, that the Jesuits had never been formally and legally received in France, by the various parliaments of the kingdom. This discovery immediately, by holding out the greatest prospect of success, roused their enemies vehemently to attack them; and amidst the first was the celebrated La Chalotais, procureur-général in the parliament of Britany. He had ever shown himself inimical to them, and he it was who assailed the Jesuits with the most close and accurate reasoning; though no one who reads his work can well doubt, that he suffered himself often to be led, by party feeling, to urge assertions destitute of proof.

It would appear, however, that neither the monarch himself, nor Choiseul, was perfectly determined to exterminate the order of Jesus, though they both, undoubtedly, disapproved of many of the internal regulations of that body, and could not by any means uphold that general system, which established in the heart of every kingdom a secret empire, founded chiefly upon the influence obtained over men's minds in youth. However that may be, a commission was appointed to examine accurately the constitution of the society, to discover and display that which was objectionable, and to make a report upon the subject to the crown. Choiseul at first proposed to reform the

order, but not to abolish it ; and the court employed a personage of the name of Fleisselles to draw up a project for that purpose, which was sent to Rome, in November, 1761, for the approbation of the pope and of Ricci, the general of the order.

Several causes are assigned for the non-execution of this project. Voltaire declares that Clement XIII. replied to the application of the king, that the Jesuits must either remain as they were, or must cease to exist at all. It is certain, however, that scarcely had the project been sent to Rome when La Chalotais, in his public capacity, attacked the body in the parliament of Britany. On the 1st of December, he begun reading his famous *Compte rendu* on the constitution of the Jesuits, and followed the blow by a second *Compte rendu* in March of the following year. The publication of this examination of the Jesuits' institutions called forth a multitude of defenders from that body, and a war of pens commenced, into which it is unnecessary to examine. It is sufficient to say that the parliaments universally declared themselves opposed to the society of Jesus ; that the obstinacy of the pope, and of Ricci their general, alienated an immense number of those who were friendly, or only partially opposed to it ; and that Choiseul, having to choose between the great body of the French magistrature and a dangerous religious community, determined to support the parliaments, and suppress the Jesuits throughout France.

In forming this determination, he consulted not only his own good sense, but his natural bias both against the Jesuits, whom he had always opposed, and in favour of the parliaments, whom he always looked upon as the safeguard and the surety both of the people and the throne. He had, however, an opponent to encounter, in executing this purpose, much more formidable and difficult to deal with than any of the body of the Jesuits. This was the dauphin, son of Louis XV., and father of Louis XVI., who put himself prominently forward as the supporter of the order assailed, and brought, in opposition

to the parliaments and the minister, a high reputation for reasonable piety and talents of various descriptions.

Had Louis XV. and his son been equally good, or equally bad, the resistance of the dauphin to the purposes of the minister might probably have been successful. But, although by no means at open enmity with his son, as had been the case between a king of England and a prince of Wales, Louis XV. did not possess that degree of affection towards one whose life was a daily reproach to him, which could have induced him to give their full weight to the arguments of the dauphin.

Under any other circumstances, the haughty, determined, and sarcastic conduct of the duke of Choiseul must at once have proved his ruin ; for the disputes between him and the dauphin were carried on with a degree of acrimony which made the minister in the end forget entirely the respect that was due to the son of his sovereign. Numberless tart replies are attributed to the duke ; and it would appear that the dauphin was not less severe in his rejoinders, till a conversation which had been promoted by the king for the purpose of reconciling the two, ended by Choiseul replying to the prince, "I may, perhaps, sir, have the misfortune to become your subject ; but I will never be your servant." The dauphin immediately complained in severe terms to the king ; but Louis supported his minister ; and notwithstanding the open enmity which existed between his son and Choiseul, any thing but a diminution of the monarch's favour towards the latter took place. He succeeded in his object, too, and the Jesuits were finally suppressed, and banished from France.

This may be considered as the second great effort of Choiseul's ministry ; but his open enmity with the dauphin soon brought upon him a charge of the most unjust and terrible nature. That prince, at the very period of his dispute with Choiseul, was afflicted with the commencement of a malady which not long after terminated his existence. The disease was undoubtedly that known ordinarily by the name of con-

sumption ; but Choiseul found that on the dauphin's death it was industriously rumoured that he had caused a slow poison to be administered to the prince. There is some reason even to believe, that the report was circulated by the various enemies which were rising up against him in the court and in the ministry ; but the favour of the duke of Choiseul with the king was unshaken, and his daring, bold, and straightforward character repelled the charge in such a manner, that it obtained little or no credit, whether it was promulgated for the purposes of political ambition or jesuitical revenge.

In the mean time, Choiseul pursued all his purposes with a great degree of firmness and determination ; and it may be as well to notice here some of his principal acts in pursuit of various detached objects, before we turn to that serious and important transaction which terminated his ministry, and which may be regarded as the first great blow to the royal authority in France. Finding the inefficacy of the military regulations established in the French army, and attributing to those regulations a great part of the disasters which had befallen France in the war, he put forth a new ordinance in the close of 1762, by which the whole constitution of the French armies was radically changed. At the same time, a number of regiments were reduced, and the alteration altogether produced so much discontent, that a great number of the old officers in the service resigned.

Though certainly irritable and imperious, Choiseul received their resignation without anger, and even granted to those who retired with a reputation untouched, pensions proportionate to their services. At the same time great attention was paid to the marine, and sixty-four ships of the line were found in the ports or dockyards of France, within eight years after the termination of a war in which her navy was supposed to have been destroyed. Such was the effect of his efforts to restore France to the position she had lost as a military nation ; and, at the same time, he took

measures, which by some strange neglect were not counteracted by Great Britain, for acquiring possession of Corsica, long misgoverned by and in revolt against the Genoese. Nor did he neglect to employ all his own wonderful activity in frustrating the designs of Russia, raising up against her an enemy in the Ottoman Porte, irritating her upon her Polish frontier, and entangling her with adversaries in the empire.

At the same time, he neglected no means whatsoever to depress or counterbalance the power of England; and there can be little or no doubt, that French officers and agents were employed to poison the minds of the Asiatic princes against this country, to direct their efforts, and to communicate to them such stores of European skill, as might enable them to maintain a war against Great Britain with some success. America, however, afforded a field for his intrigues still more vast and fertile. Those provinces were speedily involved in disputes with Great Britain; and, although we cannot acknowledge that the French writers speak justly when they say that Choiseul sowed the seeds of separation between the two countries, inasmuch as the causes of that separation were inherent in the position and pretensions of the two lands, yet there can be no doubt that he effected a very great deal to irritate men's minds in America, and to hasten forward an event which might otherwise have been delayed for many years.

It was evident that all these steps were the preparations for another war; and either with a view to the same event, or for the purpose of repairing the commercial and financial disasters of the country, it is certain that the French minister applied himself earnestly to reduce the expenditure of the state by every means in his power. In his own departments, a saving of several millions was effected rapidly, and as he acted as prime minister, though he did not take the title, he had an opportunity of introducing his own system of economy into many other branches of the go-

vernment. Notwithstanding his efforts for the purpose, it was, as usual, in regard to the finances, that those contentions arose between the king and the parliaments of the kingdom, which produced the first direct resistance to the royal authority that had taken place in France since the majority of Louis XV.

We have shown, that the parliaments of France had long claimed a right of registering the decrees of the king, and had announced that no decrees had the force of law without such registration. This right was conceded to them by the crown ; but the parliament also claimed the right to examine and deliberate upon the royal ordinances, to suspend their execution, and to remonstrate with the king against them. This right had always been contested by the monarchs ; and by holding what were called beds of justice, they from time to time caused the decrees to be registered in their presence, without the examination required. These beds of justice had been greatly multiplied of late years, but the triumph of the parliaments over the Jesuits inspired them with the spirit necessary to resist the royal will ; and, in the commencement of 1763, that spirit of resistance manifested itself decidedly.

Notwithstanding all the efforts of Choiseul, it was found, impossible to terminate several of the taxes which had been levied to carry on the war, at its conclusion ; and on the 24th of April, in the above year, an edict was issued for the continuance of such taxes, coupled with some provisions for the redemption of the national debt. In a moment, however, the whole parliaments of the realm took fire. They refused to register the edict, and vigorous remonstrances of a very threatening kind instantly poured in upon the king from every part of the realm. The parliaments of Paris, Bordeaux, Rouen, Toulouse, Besançon, Grenoble, &c. all prepared to resist manfully, and the chamber of aides at Paris, which joined in the remonstrance of the parliament, had the boldness to suggest to the king, in distinct terms, the convocation of the

states-general. To meet these measures, the court employed the exercise of its despotic authority. Governors of a determined character were sent into the refractory provinces, and endeavoured to force the parliaments, by intimidation, to receive the edicts: but the parliaments in their turn, indignant at the attempt to intimidate them, carried their boldness so far as to order the king's governor, in three several instances, to be arrested.

To enter into the detail of all these disputes, would be a history in itself. It is sufficient to say, that, in the end, the parliaments succumbed to the royal authority, and there is every reason to believe that Choiseul, though undoubtedly favourable to the general cause of liberty, aided the crown with sincerity in putting down an attempt which, had it gone on, must have terminated in a speedy revolution. The king, however, was made to believe that such was not the case; and all that remains for us to do, is, to show how this impression upon the monarch's mind was made use of to overthrow the duke of Choiseul.

In regard to the Jesuits, it would seem, a division had taken place in the ministry, and two parties had been formed in the court. The chancellor Maupeou, together with Flesselles and others, would have modified the treatment of the Jesuits, according to the project drawn up by the latter. Choiseul, after hesitating on the subject, determined to support the parliaments in their purpose of utterly expelling the Jesuits from France, and no efforts were wanting on the part of Maupeou and others, from that moment, to drive him from the ministry. After the death of madame de Pompadour, Louis XV. threw himself into the arms of the celebrated madame du Barry, the most abandoned prostitute that he could find in his dominions; and this personage was courted and supported by the chancellor and his faction; while Choiseul, his family and friends, set their face against her in the most determined manner, and the minister even obtained the king's promise not to suffer her to appear at court.

That promise, however, Maupeou and the rest induced him to violate, and although madame du Barry offered to sacrifice all her friends, even the chancellor himself, to Choiseul, the minister only treated her with aggravated scorn, spared neither her nor the king in his public sarcasms, and directed his whole family to display their contempt towards her on all occasions of court ceremony.

The king during many months resisted all the suggestions of his mistress and of the chancellor, and maintained Choiseul in the ministry till the year 1770. In the end, however, a letter, either forged or misapplied, but apparently in the hand-writing of Choiseul, was brought before the monarch, which seemed to show that the minister was supporting the parliaments secretly in their resistance to the crown. There can be no doubt whatsoever, that if this letter was from the hand of Choiseul, it was written, not at the period at which it was brought forward, but during the struggle of the parliaments with the Jesuits.* Louis XV., however, was induced to see it in another light, and being at the same time greatly irritated at the bold and somewhat insolent opposition of his minister to his mad passion, he dismissed him from the government on the 24th of December, 1770, and banished him from the court to his country seat at Chanteloup.

Choiseul was never suffered to return while the reign of Louis XV. continued; but he had recovered all his popularity during the latter years of his ministry, and the road from Paris to Chanteloup was covered incessantly with carriages, filled with the multitudes of those who were anxious to pay him a tribute of respect. He was looked upon by the court and the people as the defender of the parliaments in the council of the king, and the victim of his constitutional opposition to those measures which took place in the last years of his ministry and shortly before his fall, in consequence of which the parliaments

* It was addressed to the abbé Chauvelin, and without date.

of France were dissolved, and new tribunals instituted in their place. The hatred of the nation was transferred to another object, and few ministers were ever more distinguished by public applause on quitting office than the duke of Choiseul.

He was at this time, however, immensely in debt; for he had contracted a habit of splendour and profusion, which his private fortune and the emoluments of his office could hardly defray. They might, indeed, have defrayed that expense, had it not been that on several occasions he borrowed from his own private resources to supply the need of the state. There seems to be now no doubt that such was the case, and that many of the gratifications and rewards which were given to individuals for distinguished services during his ministry, were derived from the purse of the statesman himself, and not from the royal treasury. Choiseul, however, was of a temperament to bear with the greatest fortitude, or perhaps carelessness, the reverses which befel him. Eager, fiery, and uncompromising, he was nevertheless in no degree of a sullen or melancholy disposition. His cheerfulness, his gaiety, suffered no depression from his expulsion from office; his sarcastic wit received no check, and he did not even suffer his tranquillity to be disturbed by the court forcing him to dispose of his high and lucrative office of colonel-general of the Swiss for a sum very inferior to the value of the post.

To meet his pecuniary difficulties, he sold a number of fine pictures and a part of his wife's jewels; and, surrounded by all that could make life happy in the country, he passed the time of his exile, till the death of Louis XV., in 1774, afforded an opportunity for his return to court. The mild and amiable Louis XVI. immediately reversed the sentence of banishment, and efforts were made by the friends of Choiseul to restore him to the ministry, but without effect; the young monarch having placed his whole confidence in the count de Maurepas. Choiseul seems to

have easily consoled himself for his exclusion, and continued to enjoy that domestic happiness which was his portion in the society of a woman who loved him with the deep and devoted affection always shown towards him by his wife. Married to him in her very earliest youth, and filled with sincere admiration of his talents, she had continued strenuously to cultivate her own abilities, in order to make herself a worthy companion for her husband ; and the only drawback to their felicity in the later years of their union was the want of children.

For fifteen years after his expulsion from the ministry, the duke of Choiseul continued to form one of the great ornaments of that distinguished circle which he himself selected from the society of Paris : he died at length, in May, 1785, at the age of sixty-six.

In person he was remarkably plain, even to ugliness, but his countenance was full of expression and energy. He was small in stature, but well made and active, and in his demeanour he was graceful and affable, though quick and bitter when offended. In all situations of life he had shown great courage and firmness, and incessant activity was the principal characteristic of his ministry. He had much penetration, and was undoubtedly possessed of those liberal views and feelings which, had they been followed with prudence, by a firm and determined minister, who knew when to resist, and understood the nice but important distinction between *granting* and *yielding*, might yet have saved France from the *horrors* of its revolution, though not from changes which might deserve that name.

As it was, the measures promoted by his adversaries in the council, and which he himself was unable to restrain, may be considered as having laid the first stone of the edifice of democratic power in France. The foundation, it is true, had been dug long before.

The comprehensiveness of the duke of Choiseul's mind, and his skill in negotiation, are shown by the conception and execution of the Family Compact, which proved the

greatest source of annoyance and injury to England (whom he then justly considered as the determined enemy of France) that had been afforded by any treaty during many centuries. This was certainly the masterpiece of his ministry : for we can neither look upon the fact of his having cultivated the seeds of revolt sown in America, or of his having excited for any purpose a sanguinary war between two distant powers, as the acts of a great statesman or a great man. They belong to that petty school of diplomacy, which has acquired so many admirers and so many followers, solely because its doctrines are fitted to limited minds, and its objects attainable by small capacities.

JAMES NECKER.

BORN 1732, DIED 1804.

THE life of Necker, one of the most interesting and instructive that could be written, if treated as an historical essay, offers no very striking incidents as a matter of private biography. The difficulties of his situation, and his constant application to business, during his political career, rendered his life, while in office, but a part of the history of the times, and, in his retirement, the course of his existence underwent few variations. Those variations, however, were important; and though perhaps the time is not yet come, when full justice can be rendered either to the defects or the talents of that famous minister, yet we must endeavour to give an impartial account, however brief, both of the public and private career of the celebrated minister of the French revolution.

James Necker was born at Geneva on the 30th September, 1732. His family, which originally came from Germany, had been long settled in the republic where he entered into life; and, though it would appear that his race belonged to the nobles of the country from which it first came, all the prejudices attached to that rank had been done away with, and, from his earliest years, Necker was destined by his parents to commercial life.

The situation of Geneva, a small free state surrounded by monarchs more or less despotic, and yet encouraging in its bosom that liberty of thought and discussion which had been banished from many of the adjacent countries, had rendered the city and the vicinity, for many years previous to the birth of Necker, the resort both of men of letters and real genius, and of many whose only title to distinction was the activity of irritable imaginations and restless minds. Great advantages, however, resulted from

such circumstances to all persons who wished to acquire knowledge and information ; for, although the doors which were constantly thrown open before them might lead the blind and the misguided into paths of danger and difficulty, those who were properly directed could not fail to meet with a clear and direct way to the attainment of knowledge and accurate information.

Necker, then, from a very early age, showed a strong disposition for the study of philosophy, as it was then understood, and of political economy, yet but inaccurately known ; and in all such pursuits he had ample scope and opportunity given him, his relations and friends affording him every means of instruction, and only requiring that he should make himself completely master of all commercial details, that his progress in the course of life which they had laid out for him might not be impeded. He was sent to Paris at an early period, and placed in the bank of a M. Vernet, where he passed through the initiatory stages of his profession. He was then placed as a partner in the well-known house of Thellusson, where he acquired a complete and general knowledge of all commercial transactions, which he turned much to the advantage of the house and of himself.

In this firm he succeeded in accumulating a large independent fortune ; and, while yet in the prime of life, obtained leisure to dedicate himself to the subjects which had captivated his youth, without detriment to his mercantile career. He had by this time acquired a high reputation, not only as a man but as a financier, and was appointed, at about the age of thirty, syndic of the French company of the Indies, which, I believe, was one of the first public employments, for so it might be considered, of him, who was afterwards to rule the destinies of France. His exertions in this situation were very great, though they ultimately proved ineffectual. He laboured strenuously to restore to the company the splendour of former days, and apparently succeeded in some degree, notwithstanding the fierce attacks of persons who assailed it on both general and interested

views ; but that, which of course cramped all his efforts, and ultimately rendered them ineffectual, was the preconceived determination of the ministers to put an end to the company. A multitude of persons poured forth upon the company of the Indies, in 1769, all that peculiar kind of abuse, which is the best fitted to raise popular outcry against either men or institutions ; and though Necker, both by his influence and his pen, defended the company which he had administered so successfully, the abbé Morellet, and its other assailants, prevailed ; and, in 1770, the company of the Indies was put an end to.

The very defence of that institution had called the eyes of Necker to the administration of Colbert ; and, in a very few years after the fall of the company of the Indies, the academy having proposed a prize for an eulogium on the famous minister of Louis XIV., it was won by a production of the Genevese banker. He undoubtedly held up Colbert to himself as a model to follow, although he had not that remarkable firmness of character which distinguished Colbert, and which, perhaps, employed on the eve of the famous revolution, might have deprived that political convulsion of the excesses which rendered it a great calamity. He was now, however, embarked in diplomatic life, having been appointed by the republic of Geneva its resident at the court of France, and passed much of his time in the brilliant society, partly literary, partly political, which assembled at the house of the duc de Choiseul.

Some time before this period, however, Necker had become attached to a Mlle. Curchod de Nasse, the daughter of a protestant clergyman in the Pays de Vaud, a person equally distinguished for beauty and talents, and who had received from her father such an education as is but rarely bestowed upon a woman. This young lady is celebrated in history, not only on account of her own individual virtues and high qualities, but as an object of the affection of two of the most opposite, but distinguished, men of the day : these were Necker and Gibbon. The latter had been sent by his father to

Lausanne, in order it would seem to reclaim him from popery ; and both his own account and that of Rousseau appear to show that, notwithstanding the lamentable ugliness of his countenance, and all that was disagreeable in his manners and character, Gibbon succeeded in acquiring so far the regard of Mlle. Curchod, that she was willing to become his wife. The father of the historian, however, opposed the union of his son with a foreigner ; and, while Gibbon himself submitted his passion to the dictation of his father with a good grace, Mlle. Curchod was probably not deeply disappointed.

Some years elapsed, however, before she gave her hand to another ; but, in 1764, she was married to Necker, for whom she seems to have entertained feelings very different and far more intense than those which she had ever felt towards Gibbon. Necker was now as happy in domestic life as the union of virtue with virtue, and talent with talent, in the bond of mutual affection, could be expected to render him ; but it would seem that Mme. Necker was not without ambition. Distinction was an object which she had been taught to look for in the man of her choice ; and there is some reason to believe that her preference for political eminence over domestic felicity served not a little to increase whatever share of ambitious energy existed in Necker's disposition, and to lead him forward into the scenes of political contention, and to the arena of ambitious struggles, in which he soon played a part.

Several little treatises, which appeared from the pen of the future minister, on different subjects connected with the commerce of the country, called public attention to a man who distinguished himself at a time when the treasury of the state was virtually bankrupt, and when no one had been found to propose any rational plan of relief. Such was the situation which he held in public esteem at the period of the accession of Louis XVI., who immediately nominated as his minister the count de Maurepas. As ill calculated as any person that ever lived to disentangle a country

from the evils which had been entailed upon it by the bad government of a long succession of ministers and monarchs, Maurepas was a man originally well disposed, not without a certain degree of acuteness and talent; but he had never been firm in character, and whatever energy he had possessed in youth had been enfeebled by age, and quelled under an exile of twenty years from the court, in which he had once been distinguished.

He brought, then, to the government of a country labouring under a malady of the most acute kind, a system of palliatives which could only allay some of the symptoms, but could by no means cure the disease. Ignorant himself of finance, he called Necker to the head of that department in 1776, making him, in the first place, director of the treasury, under the comptroller-general Taboureau, as a sort of initiative. It is probable that Maurepas, in making this nomination, was more influenced by the hope of obtaining money for carrying on the business of the state through Necker's high credit in the mercantile world, and skill in all commercial transactions; than by any purpose of applying to the great evil of the state — its pecuniary embarrassments — a specific remedy by means of Necker's financial talents and genius for political economy.

The abilities which the Genevese minister now displayed recommended him powerfully to the king; and early in the following year he became director-general of finance. At this time, one of the companions of Necker in the administration was the famous Turgot, a bold, zealous, determined reformer, who sought to put an end to the murmurs of the people, by removing all those real evils which existed to excite them. He — and there is reason to believe that the same was the view of Malesherbes — proposed, as the first principles of his administration, to restore freedom of conscience to all men; to abolish the use of the torture in all cases; to put an end to arbitrary imprisonments; to terminate all those inequalities of law which made a distinction

between any two classes of the people, in matters either of taxation or of justice ; and, in fact, to make equity the only rule in the dealings of the government with the people.

Such were the views of Turgot ; and, had he been permitted, he would undoubtedly have had the firmness to carry them into execution, though, perhaps, not the prudent moderation so to carry them into execution as not to produce great concomitant evils by the change. Such a minister, however, was by no means suited to act under the supreme direction of the feeble Maurepas, in whom age had produced more decrepitude of mind than of body. Turgot had gained great influence with the king ; but he was hated by the court, by the parliament, and by the prime minister ; and he was soon after driven from the government by Maurepas. Necker still remained, though his principles were by no means dissimilar to those of Turgot himself — perhaps even verging more decidedly towards democracy, in consequence of having received both his birth and early education in the bosom of an old republic. To the high-toned and generous principles of Turgot, Necker, though inferior to him in many points, added great and remarkable skill in almost all branches of finance, and he carried the same system of open dealing and determined reform into his branch of the administration which Turgot had endeavoured to introduce into his.

One of the greatest evils which existed in France had been the multiplication of useless posts and offices, which had been created for corrupt purposes, granted for corrupt services, or sold to supply the temporary necessities of the court. At these, it would seem, Necker had previously determined to strike, if ever he arrived at power ; and his first act, on being appointed to a post in the ministry, was to refuse to receive any salary, in order that he might act more freely in diminishing the salaries of others, and abolishing those posts which he judged necessary to suppress. We cannot here enter either into the justice or the reason-

ableness of his conduct in all the cases in which he found it necessary to put an end to different offices about the court. It is sufficient to say that, in a very few months, he had suppressed upwards of 600 posts, which were utterly useless and unnecessary, and the high salaries attached to which were a continual drain upon the treasury. Other offices were diminished in point of salary, and a great saving was also effected in the method of collecting the revenue. The clearest system was introduced into the public accounts, and, as is always the consequence of order, great savings of labour, time, and money were immediately produced.

By these means, and with the existing revenues of the country, Necker was not only enabled to meet the current expenses, but in some degree to relieve the burdens of the people. The tax called the *taille*, though not abolished, was diminished; and a decree of the king fixed its extent, for the future, so as to guard it against those arbitrary augmentations which preceding kings had frequently recurred to. The difficulties which naturally surround a minister on entering into power with an embarrassed state of finances, were increased, in the case of Necker, by the commencement of the severe and long protracted war known by the name of the first American war. In the contest between Great Britain and her colonies, France most unwisely, as she was then situated, determined to take a part, notwithstanding the decided opposition of many persons high in influence at the court, amongst whom one of the most distinguished was Necker himself.

That which he could not prevent, however, Necker did not do a little to remedy by exerting himself with the utmost energy and success to relieve the country from the burdens under which she groaned. It would seem, however, notwithstanding the success which he really obtained, and which he himself estimated perhaps too highly, that Necker foresaw, from the difficulties of finance into which the country was plunged, from the spirit of innovation and change

which had gained ground amongst the people, and from that longing for liberal, if not for democratic, institutions, which pervaded all classes, and which was certainly not likely to be diminished by the contagion of the American institutions, that it would be absolutely necessary for the monarch to have recourse ultimately to the states-general of the kingdom, and, by reviving that free institution, which had existed even in the sternest times of feudalism, to base the proceedings of the sovereign upon the only legitimate and firm foundation, the consent and approbation of the people.

Proceeding, however, as cautiously in execution as he did boldly in the formation of his design, Necker determined, before he had recourse to an institution to the functions of which the people had long been unaccustomed, to prepare the way by the means of provincial assemblies or parliaments; and even in commencing such a course of action to proceed gradually, trying the provincial parliaments first in one province, and then in another, so as to give no violent shock to the existing state of things. By some writers this scheme is attributed to Turgot; but there can be no doubt whatsoever that Necker entertained it also, and that under his administration were made the first efforts to carry it practically into execution by the introduction of provincial assemblies in the provinces of Berri and Rouergue.

By this undertaking, the minister gave very great offence to the parliament of Paris, as by his suppression of unnecessary offices he had created 600 mortal enemies amongst persons connected with the highest and most influential families of the state. The people in general, however, admired and approved; and a financial statement which the minister prepared, and which became famous throughout the whole world as the *Compte rendu* of Necker, added immensely to his popularity with the great body of the French nation. The *Compte rendu* was, in fact, a statement of the finances, drawn up in clear and intelligible terms, and laid before the king in 1781; showing the monarch, for

the first time, at one view, the real state of his affairs. This, by Necker's consent and advice, was printed and made public: for it was one of his great principles in treating the finances of the state, to meet all the difficulties boldly, and to give the utmost publicity to every thing connected therewith.

Under many points of view, this conduct was politic as well as honest; for, by accustoming the people to know the difficulties with which the government struggled, he might well expect to teach them to bear the burdens imposed upon them with greater patience; while, by showing them that every thing was done which could be done to diminish those burdens, he hoped to teach them to bear them cheerfully. He also taught them by such candour to put confidence in the government, and hoped with a generous nation to obtain support by showing himself deserving of it. It is true, indeed, that by so doing he showed the people their own power and the weakness of the government; and it is very probable that Necker did not fully consider that great multitudes are almost always led by small factions, and that generosity and confidence are not in their nature so active as ambition and suspicion.

The first blow he was to receive, however, was not from the people, but from the court. With the multitude his popularity remained undiminished, and his exertions for the benefit of the state, his independence and freedom from all views of personal interest, as well as the unbounded charities of his wife and family, and his own attention to every thing that could solace or relieve a people suffering under a severe war, gained him very generally love and esteem with the middle and lower classes.

By the *Compte rendu* he showed that, on taking upon himself the supreme direction of the finance, he had found a deficit in the revenue of 34,000,000 of livres; and that, notwithstanding the war, without any additional imposts, and even with a diminution of the popular burdens, he had contrived to make the annual

receipts exceed the expenditure by a sum of 10,000,000 of livres. We cannot pause here to inquire whether in this *Compte rendu* there was or was not a certain portion of fallacy ; whether Necker did or did not suffer himself to be led away by a natural fondness for his own plans and doctrines, into giving an exaggerated picture of their success. Certain it is, and beyond all doubt, that, in the most embarrassed state of finance that France had ever seen, Necker did a great deal to relieve the people, to make the receipts cover the expenses, and even to create a store to diminish the enormous burdens of the state. Surely, that was credit enough ; but that credit those who envied and those who hated him were not at all inclined to allow him.

The *Compte rendu* was assailed by numerous critics : every thing that appeared like an exaggeration was pointed out with eagerness ; false lights were thrown upon the difficult subject which he had undertaken to treat ; sneers, insinuations, and calumnies were added ; and every attempt, in short, was made to decry the minister of finance, to hold up his *Compte rendu* as a false and fraudulent statement, and to excite against him the outcry of all those bodies who were most likely to work his fall. Necker, as may be imagined, was very much mortified and distressed ; and by no means without pride of a particular kind, his feelings were wounded by seeing himself surrounded by enemies and adversaries at a moment he had been labouring to deserve friendship and support.

His mortification, however, was very greatly increased when he discovered that those enemies were in the cabinet as well as in the court. He soon found that the papers which he had confided to the other ministers and to the king, of the most private and important character, were circulated amongst the public, with comments and observations, calculated to raise up against him a host of enemies. He found that Maurepas himself not only listened to all the charges against him, but countenanced them by his own observations and

sneers ; and he found, still farther, that such breach of confidence having been committed towards him by some of the members of the council, it became absolutely necessary to make a change in his and their relative situations, if he desired really to benefit the country, and even to maintain his own reputation.

Maurepas himself had a certain and definite cause of animosity towards Necker. He had, it appears, appointed, some time before, Sartine, the lieutenant of the police, a most incompetent person, to the post of minister of marine ; and Necker met with the greatest difficulty, during the course of a long and difficult war, in transacting the frequent business which he had with that functionary. He had frequently represented the matter to the king ; and taking advantage of an opportunity when Maurepas was detained in Paris by illness, he proposed to Louis XVI. to remove Sartine, and bestow his post upon the marquis de Castries, a person well fitted for it in every respect. The king consented, but Maurepas never forgave Necker, and seized the first opportunity of vengeance.

In the business of the *Compte rendu*, his malice displayed itself in the most striking manner, and Necker found that he was not only secretly condemned by the prime minister, but made by him a public object of scorn and sarcasm. Necker had also discovered, as we have before said, that the plan which he had drawn up for the establishment of provincial assemblies had been copied, and circulated amongst the counsellors and other members of the parliament of Paris, and he determined to place himself in a more favourable position, or to quit a ministry with the other members of which he could not act in safety. It is necessary, however, to show what was the situation in which he was placed. By one of the strangest anomalies that it is possible to conceive, the minister who held one of the most important situations under the crown — the general direction of the finances — did not by right of his post, as he ought to have done, obtain admission to the privy council. Thus, all the plans of Necker, however excel-

lent in conception, and however admirably executed by him after their adoption, were submitted to and discussed in his absence by a body of men, several of whom he knew to be inimical to him. Whatever representations they thought fit, also, were sent forth by them to the public; and in order to put a stop to the intrigues which were taking place against him, he found it absolutely necessary to demand a place in the privy council, and to be present at the discussion of his own proposals.

Necker accordingly made application in form for what was called entry of the council, and this Maurepas caused to be refused him, endeavouring, indeed, to soften the insult and the injustice which he showed towards a man who may be said to have saved him and his ministry from destruction, by offering him various court favours and distinctions*, which offers the minister treated as they deserved. Necker now demanded to be permitted to retire, and sent in his resignation; but before it was accepted, many great efforts were made, by persons really desirous of the good of the country, to induce him to remain in the ministry.

Necker, however, was found to be immovable in this respect; and it has been generally supposed, that madame Necker herself, indignant at the conduct with which her husband was treated, and apprehensive both for his safety and his honour, used the whole of the vast influence which she possessed over him, to induce him to adhere unchangeably to his resolution. This seems to have been admitted on all hands; and her great influence with her husband is proved beyond a doubt by the very singular tokens of respect which Necker had always displayed towards his wife, not only in the private circles of Paris, or in the management and distribution of the vast charities which they exercised, or even in the minor arrangements of some of the branches of administration entrusted to him,

* The entrée at court was offered him, we are told, as an equivalent.

such as the amelioration of the prison system, the administration of hospitals, &c., but also in the great and important points which he had treated in the *Compte rendu*, in regard to which he pays to madame Necker the extraordinary compliment of declaring, that some of the most weighty matters in which he had succeeded owed their result to her.

After many of his friends had endeavoured to prevail upon him to change his resolution, representing to him, that the count de Maurepas had already passed the ordinary term of human life, and could not be expected to linger on much longer, and after Necker had rejected all solicitations on the subject, the beautiful and unfortunate Marie Antoinette determined to use her influence to induce him to remain in the ministry. She laid wait for him, and caused him to be brought into her cabinet, to hold a private conversation with her on the subject; while a multitude of persons, alarmed by the turn that affairs had taken, waited without to know the result. At length, when the queen came forth, there was much mortification to be seen in the expression of her countenance; and one of the courtiers ventured to question her, to which she merely replied, "He positively refuses."

Necker, retiring from the government of the finances, devoted himself for a time to the pleasures of domestic life, and to writing one of the most famous works that ever was published upon that branch of administration which he had lately quitted. The private life of the statesman, during the whole term of his residence in Paris, was such as conciliated the respect and esteem of those with whom he mingled. All the men of literary eminence of the day congregated at his house; and in the midst of contending opinions, and of all those vague, wild theories, which preceded the Revolution, he maintained the calm and dignified moderation of a wise man, neither giving way to the rash and giddy systems that were whirling round him, nor denying to others that liberty of thought and faith which he exercised so reasonably himself. Marmontel, Buffon,

Saint Lambert, Thomas, and others were the constant and well pleased guests at his table ; while the great and beneficent works which he undertook for the relief of the prisoners, the sick, and the poor of the metropolis, acquired for him the love of other classes.

But the fame of Necker had reached long before to parts of the country which he had never visited, and a thousand testimonies of respect flowed in upon him, immediately after his resignation, which he himself could not have expected. A number of towns openly sent him addresses, expressing their regret at his retirement from the ministry ; and no one even amongst his enemies could shut their eyes to the fact, that the retirement of Necker from the department of finance was looked upon by the whole country as a national misfortune. We are told, also, that more than one sovereign in Europe, the chief of whom was the emperor Joseph, offered to place Necker immediately at the head of their finance ministry. He declined all offers, however, probably believing that, ere long, circumstances would compel the king of France to require again his services ; and that the death of Maurepas would remove the obstacles which prevented him from serving Louis with as much willingness as energy and zeal.

In this respect, however, if he entertained such an expectation, he was disappointed. It is not improbable that both the king and queen were somewhat offended by the great financier's pertinacity in insisting upon his resignation being accepted ; and certain it is, that on the death of Maurepas, which took place shortly after, the claims of Necker were either forgotten or neglected, and he remained banished from the ministry, while Vergennes was placed at the head of public affairs, and Calonne was intrusted with the ministry of finance.

In the mean time appeared the famous book of Necker on the administration of the finances — probably the most popular work of the kind that ever was written. The press could not supply the demand with sufficient rapidity, and 80,000 copies of the book were

sold in a few weeks. Every man in France studied Necker's system, and imagined himself a financier ; and many gained real information on the subject, which rendered them eager, not only to acquire more, but to employ, right or wrong, the portion of science which they had obtained. During all these events, the new ministers of Louis XVI. were hurrying on their master into the awful catastrophe into which he was destined ultimately to plunge. Calonne, rash and imprudent, seems to have proceeded upon the principle that the welfare of the state alone depended upon the rapid circulation of money ; that no caution was necessary ; that no prudence was required ; that all that was necessary was to encourage industry and exertion by prodigality and luxury. He fancied that the great body of France was in an atrophy ; to cure it of which he hurried it into a fever.

Instead of there being any surplus revenue, the expenditure now greatly exceeded the income of the state ; and that income itself daily diminished, while the queen, the court, the ministers, and the placemen vied with each other in extravagance. The nation murmured, as well it might ; but the courtiers, who fattened upon Calonne's liberality, and the subordinate financiers, who preyed upon his extravagance, gave the most strenuous support to a man who had established such a golden age of peculation and corruption. Two things also combined to give Calonne greater facilities in obtaining money to supply his profuse expenditure than he naturally ought to have had. In the first place, the short administration of Necker had restored the credit of the government ; and the regularity, order, and economy which he had introduced had, as it were, screened the monarchy from the evil results of the extravagant wars of Louis XIV., the corruptions, ruinous speculations, and state gambling of the regency, and the vices, wars, and errors of Louis XV. In the next place, Calonne himself had great plausibility of statement, and even of action. No man discharged his

pecuniary obligations more punctually than he did ; and the creditors of the state found that not even Necker himself had been more accurate in his payments than Calonne.

The latter minister, however, paid old debts only by contracting new ones ; and, while the great credit which Necker had obtained for the government became exhausted by the incessant loans to which Calonne had recourse, the financiers discovered the secret of the new minister's punctuality, and began to look to the end of the system, and refuse any further applications for supplies. New taxes of some kind became the only resource, and those new taxes required the concurrence and support of some powerful body. Under these difficult circumstances, Calonne, trusting to his popular eloquence, had recourse to the old expedient of assembling the notables, or principal members of the nobility, in order to derive from them some assistance and support.

He found the notables, however, not so easy to deal with as he had expected. He was obliged, of course, to furnish some account of his administration ; and in so doing he had recourse to ingenious and plausible statements, endeavouring to embarrass the minds of inquirers by carrying up his view of the finances to former epochs ; and, having recourse to not very creditable expedients to shift the responsibility from his own shoulders, endeavoured to prove that Necker's *Compte rendu* was a fallacy, and that, in fact, instead of a surplus of ten millions in the revenue at the time when he took it into his hands, there had been, in reality, a deficiency of fifty millions.

Necker immediately roused himself at this charge, and insisted upon some explanation taking place between him and Calonne. He displayed great moderation, indeed, as well as firmness, evincing no desire publicly to expose the minister, and endeavouring, as far as possible, to obtain by gentle means that justification which he was determined to arrive at by some method.

Calonne, however, showed no disposition to meet him in such a manner ; and Necker then demanded to be publicly heard before the notables, to justify the statements he had made. This was denied him, though but an act of justice, and he then took the only means in his power to do himself right, by publishing his famous reply to the statement of Calonne. That reply was too clear and conclusive not to give offence to the minister and to those who supported him.

The friends of Calonne, however, were not the only persons who desired to crush the Genevese financier. There were other persons, occupied with more dark and sinister designs, and who laboured zealously to remove for ever from the councils of France the only man who seemed at all likely to remedy the evils and avert the convulsions on which they hoped to thrive. They determined, as soon as they heard that Necker was preparing the defence of his financial statements, and even before it appeared, to attack it ; but the words of Dumont, to whom we are indebted for information on this subject, are too curious and important to be omitted here, while speaking of a very remarkable incident in the life of the minister. They are as follows —

“ It was at the time of the quarrel between M. de Calonne and M. Necker upon the subject of the deficit. The former had his reasons for seeking to cast upon another the burthen of that imputation. He had just accused Necker of having cheated the nation, by putting forth that, on his going out of office, instead of a deficit there had been a surplus of ten millions. His work, all bristling with calculations and specious arguments, had produced a considerable effect. Necker, just entering into the ministry, announced his reply. Mirabeau, before it appeared, prepared to refute it. The enemies of Necker were accustomed to meet at the house of Panchaud the banker ; a man of talent, very intelligent in matters of finance, but one whose honour was even more dilapidated than his fortune, after a very equivocal sort of bankruptcy.

"As soon as the work of Necker was published, the coterie met every day. Mirabeau went thither to gather up the observations which were made, and to launch out at the minister. He spoke beforehand of the matter as of a complete triumph, and aimed at nothing less than unmasking the quack, ripping him up, and bringing him on his knees before Calonne, convicted of lying and incapacity. Little by little, however, this fierce fire was damped. He spoke no more upon the subject; he did not even like other people to speak to him on it. I asked him often, why this great production was deferred — from what new kindness of heart he spared the great quack in the enjoyment of his usurped reputation, — why the Panceaud committee had suspended this great act of justice. Mirabeau, to deliver himself from these reproaches, which went home to his previous boasts, told me at length that Necker was necessary for the formation of the states-general; that his popularity was wanted, and that the question of the deficit was overwhelmed in that of the double representation of the commons.

"Such a fact was sufficient to enable me to judge that the reply of M. Necker had been triumphant, and that his most ardent enemies, after having tried their teeth upon this file, had not been able to pierce it."

Such was the first proceeding in which we find Necker opposed by the famous Mirabeau, a man as unprincipled as he was talented, and who, there is every reason to believe, was not more inclined to serve his country disinterestedly than to serve his king.

Having mentioned the name of Mirabeau, we must pause for a moment on the previous history of one who was every way remarkable. This celebrated and extraordinary man, who played so prominent a part in the events of those times, was the son of the marquis de Mirabeau, a man of considerable property and talents in Provence. His family name was Riquetti, and his ancestors were originally Italian. The whole race seems to have been possessed with furious passions and re-

morseless determination, and to have been devoid of principle, if endowed with genius. His father was well known as a political writer, and as one who had as much gained his celebrity by a sort of originality which was not without affectation as by reason or eloquence. He was one of the first who attacked the despotic principle of monarchy established by Louis XIV., and was in consequence confined in the Bastille, at a time when the authority of the crown was still intact. He affected great morality in his writings, and a love of the human race ; but there is reason to believe, that in every thing but his writings he displayed another character, and was debauched in conduct and misanthropical in notions.

His eldest son, of whom we have just spoken, was born on the 9th of March, 1749. He received a desultory education, qualified to render him superficially but generally informed on many subjects. Various languages, various arts, various sciences, were all in turn studied by Mirabeau, who carried away a slight knowledge of each, and a profound knowledge of none. His great genius and extraordinary activity of mind, however, supplied many deficiencies, and enabled him to appropriate to himself, with an ease and facility quite extraordinary, the ideas and the expressions of others.

Strange to say, however, the habit and the talent of appropriation neither proceeded from, nor led to a penury of original thought ; and on those occasions when it was necessary for Mirabeau to rely upon his own resources, he showed that he could produce that fund of his own which was far superior to what he borrowed from others. The violence of all his passions, the impetuosity of his character, and his utter want of principle, showed themselves very early, and his father, who seems to have joined to the principal bad qualities of his son a great portion of sordid avarice—quite compatible with extravagance—and that sort of pride which is the eldest child of vanity, seems to have laboured to have kept his son in subjection, by making him always dependent upon him for pecuniary resources.

Thus the life of Mirabeau began in difficulties and entanglements. He first entered into a cavalry regiment as a volunteer, and applied himself sedulously to obtain some knowledge of his profession ; but an intrigue, into the details of which it is not necessary to enter here, called upon him the indignation of his father, who applied to the court for an order for his imprisonment, which was obtained. The marquis would even, it is said, have proceeded on this occasion to the same extraordinary acts of violence and persecution in regard to his son which he indulged in afterwards, had it not been for the most pressing entreaties of various friends. On issuing out of prison, Mirabeau was sent to Corsica with the regiment in which he served, and at the end of the campaign wrote a work upon the government of Genoa in that country, which gained him considerable reputation.

The constant disagreement between his father and his mother produced a spirit of faction in their family, in which Mirabeau took his full share, and he thus incurred the indignation of his father more and more every day from infancy till manhood. But, shortly after his return from Corsica, he seems to have applied himself strenuously, and with really good intentions, to cultivate the regard of his father. In order to please him, he consented to retire into the country and occupy himself in agricultural pursuits ; of which however he soon became tired, and returning to Paris, he lost, by strong and talented opposition to the political friends of the marquis, all the hold he had acquired upon his parental regard.

In 1772, he married Mlle. de Marignane, a wealthy and beautiful girl ; but even in this transaction his conduct seems not to have been without reproach, and, if we are to believe the accounts of some of his friends, he followed, for the purpose of obtaining the consent of his bride's relations, the extraordinary path of injuring her reputation. For a certain period, the fortune which he obtained with his wife afforded him the means of living

more at ease ; but in a very short time he had loaded himself with debts, and his father again interposed to make his situation worse. Instead of giving him any assistance in effecting an arrangement with his creditors, he obtained an order from the king, commanding the count his son to remain upon his estates till farther pleasure. But a duel in which he engaged himself in order to avenge one of his sisters, who had been insulted, brought upon him new severities, and he was ordered into confinement in one of the provincial prisons.

We next find him under a sort of surveillance in the town of Pontarlier, where began his unfortunate connection with madame Monier, whom he seduced. Her he entertained by every sort of means that could corrupt and deprave her mind ; and whereas, hitherto, his writings had been principally of a political character, those which were written during this connexion offer nothing but the most horrible sensuality and depravity. The intrigue was very speedily discovered, and the family of Monier, the husband, and also the family of Ruffey, the relations of the woman he had seduced, joined with his own father to destroy him.

Under these circumstances he fled to Switzerland ; and having been joined by his mistress some time afterwards, they proceeded together to Holland, where he endeavoured to gain a livelihood for both by the exercise of his pen. His father, however, ceased not to persecute him, and brought forward against his own child the most hateful and fearful of charges, with which we must not sully these pages. Mirabeau was not by any means behind in instantly retaliating, and the picture of the father by the son, and of the son by the father, are, perhaps, two of the most extraordinary instances of moral depravity on record. But the propensity to abuse all near connexions, was a peculiar trait in the family of Mirabeau ; and he is himself reputed to have said of his brother the viscount, " He would have been considered a man of wit and a blackguard in any family but ours ;"

which compliment the viscount was not slow in returning, by saying, when somebody accused him of being frequently seen drunk, "What can I do? that is the only vice my brother has left me."

His father, however, did not confine his proceedings to mere words, and the family of Monier followed eagerly in assailing the young debauchee. He was tried during his absence by the parliament of Besançon, on the accusation of having forcibly carried away madame Monier, and was in consequence condemned for rape, and decapitated in effigy, which certainly did not much hurt either his reputation or his person. The difficulty of procuring a subsistence in Holland, however, made him determine to proceed to America; but while he was preparing to put his determination in execution, the Dutch government suffered him to be arrested, and carried back to Paris with his paramour.

He was now placed in the tower of Vincennes, where he remained for three years and a half, while madame Monier was confined in a house in Paris, under the superintendence of the police. Mirabeau, however, found means to correspond with her, and the famous Letters to Sophia were the result. Those letters, indeed, were published without his knowledge or consent; and, certainly, whatever honour they may do to his talents, they do none to his heart or judgment. He translated at this time a number of obscene works for the instruction of his fair mistress, and added a variety of others from the stores of his own mind, worthy of utter detestation. Some political essays also were written by him about this period, which were not likely to gain any great favour with the government; but, nevertheless, he was shortly after set at liberty; and the extraordinary fact of such being the case, without any reasonable cause, has led many persons to suppose, without any sufficient proof, that he had joined with his father in traducing his mother. To a bad man, it is customary to attribute all sorts of bad actions that he does not commit.

No sooner was he at liberty than he hurried down to Pontarlier; gave himself up to meet the accusation brought against him; obtained a new trial, and defended himself with such tremendous powers of oratory, that he completely defeated his accuser, and the former sentence was reversed. No sooner was this over, than, being totally without money, he sought to re-enter into connexion with his wife, in order to obtain possession of the property which was falling in to her from day to day. But the wife's family resisted, and Mirabeau proceeded against them at law. In this case, however, he was not successful; for, after having used every other means in order to justify himself for his conduct towards her, he attempted to prove that her own conduct had not been quite pure, on which the judges, with wise equity, determined that he himself had furnished the strongest proof that a separation was necessary between them.

He was now reduced to absolute poverty, but he found means to proceed to England, accompanied by a Dutch girl, who had become most devotedly attached to him, and of whose depth, strength, and even purity of affection, Dumont speaks in the very highest terms, blaming Mirabeau severely for having cast away from him, at an after period, attachment so rare and so noble. He seems neither to have understood nor to have admired the institutions of Great Britain. Mirabeau, however, wrote a good deal in that country, confining himself to political works, which were then the rage in Paris, adopting very different principles at different times, but commencing by doctrines sinacking strongly of republicanism.

These works produced him a reputation of a different kind from that which his intrigues, his licentiousness, his virulence, and his crimes had obtained before; and the frequent variations of his code have given reason to believe, that his reputation as a political writer was made use of for the purpose of obtaining money from those whose party he espoused. His venality seems now to be placed beyond all doubt; but whether he had commenced at this time by selling his pen as he afterwards sold his

voice, or whether he only changed his position, as he imagined it would be beneficial to the sale of his works to do so, may be doubted.

He had returned from England after a short stay, and it was about this period that he commenced his connection with the banker Panchaud and his friends, whose constant efforts for the depression of the public funds had more to do in producing the French revolution than is generally supposed. Mirabeau now signalled himself by an immense multitude of writings, some of which added little, and some very much, to his reputation ; but they, at all events, served to obtain for him money, and having no character for honesty to lose, it little mattered to him how that money was obtained. His fierce quarrel with Beaumarchais, and the war of pamphlets which ensued, attracted still greater attention ; and shortly after, either apprehensions of encountering his fiery and overpowering opposition, the solicitation of friends, or a real appreciation of his talents, induced Calonne, then minister of finance, to despatch Mirabeau on a secret mission to the court of Prussia.

The death of that king, known under the name of Frederick the Great, was daily expected, and the object of Mirabeau's mission was to predispose the prince his successor in favour of France. In this it would seem that he was very successful for the time, and was treated with flattering distinction by Frederick himself. During his stay in that country, he acquired the materials for writing a work which afterwards appeared upon the Prussian monarchy ; and he also wrote several works in Prussia itself, which did not give much pleasure to the young monarch after his accession. His despatches to Calonne display the greatest avidity for money ; and he sought, it would seem, to be employed in some higher and more distinguished embassy. He was, however, somewhat too minute and curious in his investigation of the Prussian policy ; and shortly after the accession

of Frederick IIR, he received an order to quit Prussia without delay.

On his return to Paris, he found Calonne plunged into difficulties, and he again gave himself up to the direction of Panchaud and the other stock jobbers, who strove to advance their private interest by the depression of the public securities. About this time, Colonne first had recourse to the notables ; and during the sittings of that body, Mirabeau published several tracts, strongly depreciatory of the conduct and character of Necker. Those works had been so well received by his own party, that he flattered himself, as we have just shown, with the hope of entirely overthrowing Necker's indignant reply to Calonne ; and there cannot be the slightest doubt, that if Mirabeau or his party had found any thing whatsoever in the work of Necker, which could have afforded them the means of attack, he would not have scrupled to have made it, right or wrong, trusting to his eloquence and abundance to cover over and hide the thin stems of reasoning under a profusion of leaves and flowers. We shall have occasion to mention him more than once hereafter, as we proceed with the events affecting Necker, to which we now more immediately return.

The first efforts of Necker to refute the falsehoods of Calonne were followed immediately by an order for his exile to the distance of forty leagues from Paris ; but that act by no means tended to save Calonne from the effects of his own imprudence. His statements were examined with accuracy by the notables, and he met with a redoubtable adversary in another ambitious man, who aspired eagerly to supplant him. This was Charles Stephen de Brienne, archbishop of Toulouse, who with skill, diligence, and virulence attacked the unfortunate minister at every point, and completely exposed the evils of the system which he had followed, the fallacies of his statements, and the ruin of the finances. It was now shown, that since the resignation of Necker the state had incurred a debt of 1,646,000,000 of livres, and that the annual excess of expenditure,

even though the American war was at an end, amounted to 140,000,000.

Calonne was immediately dismissed, and his place was supplied by his celebrated antagonist, a personage capable of attacking, but not defending ; inclined to innovate, but not competent to improve ; strong enough to destroy old and decaying institutions, but not to build up any new ones in their place. Voltaire had before this time stigmatised Brienne, in a letter to D'Alembert, as “ a beast of your manufacture, very well disciplined by yourself.” Such was the personage now placed at the head of the French ministry, at a moment of the greatest difficulty and danger to the state ; but a great party of the most rational people in France conceived hopes that Necker would be called on to take upon himself once more the direction of the finances.

The king himself, also, there can, I believe, be no doubt desired and proposed that such should be the case ; and many of Brienne's own supporters pressed him to take a step which would undoubtedly have given great solidity to his ministry, restored confidence to the people, disentangled, if possible, the finances of the country, and, perhaps, might still have turned aside the revolution, or mitigated its dark and horrible character. Brienne is even said to have distinctly promised, that he would propose Necker to the king as minister of finance ; but it is asserted that he was guilty of the duplicity of instigating others to oppose a minister, whose talents he feared ; and thus, by underhand means, to exclude from office the only man who at that time could have saved France from the catastrophe that menaced it.

Such is positively asserted to have been the case ; and certain it is, that Necker was excluded from the ministry, although one of his plans was immediately adopted by the new minister, receiving at the same time the full concurrence of the notables. This was the establishment of the provincial assemblies, which he had devised long before, and which were now ordered to be established in all the provinces of the kingdom. In the

formation of these provincial assemblies, however, changes were introduced by Brienne himself, which, more than any thing which had ever yet been done, tended to hurry on the advance of the French revolution. These changes in the provincial parliaments or assemblies, which were in fact but local models of the states-general, tended absolutely to democracy.

In the provincial states, as well as in the states-general, three orders had been constantly recognised,—the clergy, the nobles, and the commons (*tiers état*) ; but, in his speech to the notables on dismissing that assembly, Brienne distinctly intimated that the clergy and the nobles should be confounded in one class ; and that the commons or third class should have an equal number of representatives with the other two classes united ; and, still further, it would seem, that the votes in these assemblies should not be taken as the separate votes of the three or two orders, but by the plurality of voices of the whole.

This announcement may be considered as one of the first great steps of the French revolution ; and every thing which Brienne did afterwards but hurried forward that event. The notables, on their separation, returning into the various provinces to which they belonged, remained impressed with all the prejudices, passions, and expectations, which had been excited during their meeting, and they communicated to others in the country the feelings by which they were themselves affected. An expectation of great changes—one of the most dangerous of expectations—became general throughout France ; discontent with the government, indignation at the extravagance of past ministers, doubts of those who actually held the reins of state, and despair of any voluntary amelioration, spread to all classes of the people ; and, in the mean time, the conduct of Brienne himself by no means tended to quiet the agitation of the popular mind.

From the very first moment of the archbishop's entrance into the ministry, he showed himself utterly incapable of carrying on with firmness and with prudence

any improvements, or indeed of sustaining with dignity any of the measures he proposed. Nothing of importance had been gained from the notables, and Brienne was forced to have recourse to taxes; and those taxes could not be imposed without the consent of the parliament. The parliament, in the mean time, demanded an account of the receipts and expenditure of the government; and it was clearly and distinctly pointed out by some of the orators of that body, that the ultimate end for which the parliament must aim, was the assembling of the states-general. At that period, and indeed for many years previous, the very idea of such an assembly as the states-general was abhorrent to the court of France.

One of the greatest evils attendant upon long and uncertain intervals between the periods of assembling popular bodies always is, that the executive has, in the intervening space of time, invariably accumulated a number of grievances and encroachments, which the representative body have to remedy and repel. The natural consequence is, that the executive delays its appeal to the representative, till it is driven to such a measure by urgent necessity, and that the representative body when appealed to seeks, in the first instance, to redress the grievances, before it gives any attention to the exigencies of the state. It generally occurs, also, that before it suffers itself to be driven to such an appeal to the representative body, the executive body, in struggling to avoid it, shows plainly its reluctance, if it be not even led to resort to unlawful methods of avoiding the measure; so that when it and the representative body at length do meet, they come together as adversaries prepared for mutual resistance, instead of friends assembled for mutual support.

The very mention then of the states-general in the parliament of Paris, was punished by the minister of Louis XVI. as a crime, and the councillor who made it was arrested. This of course but increased the inclination of the parliament to throw itself into the arms of

the states-general; and, to avoid the necessity of having recourse to that assembly, Brienne madly attempted every measure which was illegal in itself, and calculated to irritate the people. 6

It would be impossible to follow him through all the various acts by which he hastened on the French revolution. Suffice it to say, that the same sort of struggles now took place between the court and the parliament, which had occurred under the regency of Anne of Austria; but with this remarkable difference, however,—that under the regency of that queen, the parliament, though occasionally hinting at the necessity of calling the states-general, was by no means sincerely and eagerly desirous of such an assembly, which must undoubtedly diminish for the time the authority of the parliament itself; whereas, in the time of Louis XVI., the parliament was really determined to force the monarch into calling the states, as the only remedy for existing evils, and the only check upon despotic authority, with which the parliaments themselves had struggled in vain. This distinction was overlooked by Louis XVI. and his ministers, and they treated the parliament in 1787, as they judged that Anne of Austria ought to have treated the parliament of 1648.

The consequences of this mistaken conduct were fatal. The parliament well knew, that by resisting the imposition of all taxes, it must compel the ministers to have recourse to the states-general; but, against such an act, Brienne, struggled as we have said, in paroxysms of weakness and fury. He now banished the whole parliament in a body; he now recalled, flattered, and cajoled it; he now arrested and imprisoned some of its principal members; he now set them at liberty, and endeavoured to gain by corruption what he could not gain by force. He then determined to put an end to the parliament altogether, to alter once more the institutions of the country, and to supply the place of the parliament as a judicial body by an invention of his own, somewhat different from that attempted by Louis XV.,

for which he borrowed a name, though not the plan from feudal times, calling it a *cour plénière*.

This bold innovation, which might indeed have succeeded with a bold man, was perfectly unavailing in the hands of a vacillating and timid one. Some people have even suspected that Brienne was at this time insane, he having been attacked by a very serious malady, and having had recourse to dangerous remedies, it is said, to cut it short at once, which remedies had affected the brain. His acts were certainly those of a madman, and the *cour plénière*, which he established, was not only assailed by the protests of the parliament of Paris, but by the remonstrances of all the provincial assemblies throughout the country. A great body of the nobility also supported the ministry ; all the courts of law rose in favour of their brethren ; symptoms of insurrection took place simultaneously in almost every province of France, and Brienne finding that the course which he had been following could be pursued no longer, agreed, at length, to call the states-general.

Before, however, that could be done, the acme of financial ruin had arrived. On the 16th of August, 1788, took place what may in truth be considered as the first national bankruptcy of France. Brienne was obliged to suspend the payments of the *rentes*, and the first matter to be laid before the states-general, was the disgrace and insolvency of the country. No minister could, of course, retain power under such circumstances, and Brienne was consequently dismissed.

The dismissal of the archbishop was succeeded by the recall of Necker, to whom we must now turn. Before Brienne had been reduced to the extremities which drove him from the ministry, he had recourse to Necker, begging him to come to his assistance, and, if possible, remedy the disorder of the finances. But Necker had refused, saying, that a year before he should not have scrupled to take his share of the responsibility of government, but that he would not now take a part of the discredit which the ministry of

Brienne had called upon itself. When at length, however, that minister had been dismissed, and he received a summons to attend the King at Versailles, he made up his mind at once to undertake the hazardous and difficult post which was proposed to him, although he saw, and fully comprehended, all the dangers and discomforts with which it was surrounded. He was supported, indeed, by popular favour, by the memory of great services rendered to the country, by a general sense throughout the whole nation of his honour and integrity, and by an exaggerated confidence on the part of the people in his resources as a financier and a politician. On being informed of his nomination to the ministry, his first exclamation was, "Why have they not given me the fifteen months of the archbishop? but at present it is too late."

Nevertheless, he accepted the post, as we have said, without hesitation, and in looking round upon his entrance into the ministry, found a concatenation of evil circumstances which might well have alarmed the firmest heart, and made the boldest mind shrink from the undertaking. Four hundred thousand francs was all that the treasury contained.* The paper money of different kinds which had been poured forth upon the nation, was in the lowest possible state of debasement. The threatening of a famine was also to be perceived, and the king was pledged to call the states-general — the most difficult engine which a minister could be required to manage.

However, notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances, on his very first entrance into the ministry, Necker met with a token of public approbation which might well encourage him to proceed. In one single day after his appointment was known, the value of the state funds rose thirty per cent. Similar effects took place in various other points, affecting greatly the safety of the state. Loans were immediately

* I find it stated in another author that there were only two hundred and fifty thousand francs in the treasury.

offered to Necker, which had been refused to his predecessor. The tumults in the provinces ceased, activity and industry, which had been almost suspended, were resumed, and Necker applied himself to three great objects : — to solace the distressed people of France ; to remove the great political irritation which existed ; and to render the states-general well disposed towards the monarchy.

In the first of these efforts he was greatly successful, but the record of his individual exertions for this purpose would be too long. In regard to the second, Necker gained general love and general gratitude. All the persons exiled under the last ministry were recalled ; the prison doors were thrown open for those who had been arrested for opposition to the ministry, and the parliament was recalled, and restored to the exercise of its functions. The latter body was the only one which showed any degree of opposition to the minister ; but his popularity was at this time so great, that the mob assailed his opponents, and taught them that they had no longer to do with Brienne.

So far, all went smoothly with Necker, and he trusted, with the greatest degree of confidence, to bring about a complete change in the aspect of political affairs. But, unfortunately, in dealing with the states-general, Necker entered upon a track unexplored by himself, little known by any of the people of France, without guide, without chart, and without experience. Under such circumstances, it was very natural that he should mistake his path ; and it must be remarked, that, in these respects, almost every body that surrounded him was as ignorant and as mistaken as himself. There were three great questions before him with regard to the convocation of the states-general, each affecting the other in a considerable degree, each difficult of resolution in itself, and in regard to each of which Necker made a great mistake.

The first of these questions was, whether the third estate, or commons, should be rendered equal in num-

ber to the united nobles and clergy, the two first estates. The second was, what classes should be admitted into the representation of the clergy. The third, and most important by far of the whole, was, whether a landed qualification should be exacted from the representative of the third estate. On this third question, I find that very little has been said ; and yet, on it, perhaps, depended the salvation of the monarchy ; for it is demonstrated clearly by one of the biographers of Necker, that, had every man of the states-general possessed a certain stake in the country, one of the first objects of the whole would have been to preserve, though they might improve, existing institutions, and to support the state while they reformed its constitution. This was by no means perceived or attended to, although it would have had such an influence as to deprive the proposal of doubling the numbers of the third estate of all that was dangerous in its nature, by ensuring that the class of representatives should be such as had a direct interest in the preservation of order, and not such as had a direct interest in the introduction of anarchy.

Fearful of encountering a subject of such difficulty, in which he had no experience, Necker called for the support of the nobles, and laid his schemes for the constitution of the states-general before that body. The landed qualification was universally rejected by all the bureaux, though there can be little doubt, that if Necker had pressed it eagerly and upon sufficiently argumentative grounds, it would have found some support, perhaps sufficient to justify the monarch in insisting upon it. Necker, however, did not press it in such a manner, and there is every reason to believe that he did not see or know its importance.

The next question submitted to the notables was, whether the deputies of the third estate should or should not be doubled in number, so as to render the votes of the commons equal to the united votes of the nobles and clergy. This question, after the rejection

of the landed qualification, became of the utmost importance. It was, in fact, whether, as long as the states-general retained power, or delegated it to others, France should be a monarchy or a democracy. The chamber of notables was composed entirely of the higher classes ; and those higher classes had, up to that moment, placed themselves at the head of the revolution which was already going forward. They were willing to embarrass the king's government, by refusing all aid and support. They were willing to obtain credit for popular and liberal sentiments which they really did not feel, and a very great number of them, though not the whole body, were sufficiently affected with the spirit of innovation — sufficiently ensnared by the hypothetical reveries of vast improvements, not only in the social system, but in the very nature of man, which then formed a fog of theories in the French metropolis through which few could see their way distinctly — to lay down, willingly many of the exclusive privileges which they had received from their ancestors, and to see neither danger nor evil in raising up the uneducated, the ignorant, and even the unprincipled, to a high station of political power.

When it was put to the whole body of the notables, however, whether it was advisable to give the commons, in an assembly which was to determine the fate of France for ages, an equal share of power with the nobles and the clergy, the members of that body, well knowing that circumstances existed which would immediately give to the commons a real preponderance, under the semblance of equality, rejected the proposal, which was supported by only one of the bureaux.

Necker had now the very best opportunity, had he chosen to employ it, of so moulding the states-general as to guard against any dangers to the monarchy. No one, indeed, can say what might have been the result, — what accidental circumstances might have thwarted all his purposes, — what unforeseen events might have rendered vain all his efforts to put a check upon popular ex-

citement, and maintain order while he admitted reform. But the charge against Necker is that, at this, the very critical moment of the fate of France, he made no such efforts ; that, proceeding entirely upon a false principle, and with views that proved to be utterly fallacious, he placed overwhelming power in the very hands most likely to abuse it, when he had an opportunity of counterbalancing the power which circumstances naturally threw into those hands, and of checking the exercise of authority, given to men who had no certain interest in the preservation of order, by the controlling opposition of two other bodies, who had every thing to lose and nothing to gain by the approach of anarchy.

There were several circumstances, certainly, which tended to mislead him ; and although we cannot admit that those circumstances alone were sufficient, without some lurking prejudices in favour of purely democratic institutions, to mislead a great statesman and a clear-sighted man, it is but fair, in speaking of his conduct, to point them out. We must remember, then, that as yet the court of France had been chiefly opposed by the higher, and not by the lower orders ; that the ministry of Vergennes and Calonne had been called to struggle with the parliaments, principally consisting of the nobility of the robe, and with the notables, consisting entirely of the nobility and the higher orders of the clergy ; that the tumults which had taken place in the different parts of the country were generally supposed to be instigated by discontented members of the higher class ; and that, in fact, it was with the nobles, the high clergy, the men of letters, and the body of the law, down to the lower classes of advocates, that the court up to that moment had to contend. The populace were supposed to be favourable to the government, and Necker knew them to be favourable to himself.

In contemplating the assembling of the states-general, therefore, Necker had to choose between two great

parties—the lower orders and the higher; and upon the principles which were to decide his choice depended the fate of France. If he chose from a great and general knowledge of human nature; if he chose upon a grand and philosophic view of the causes which influenced man at all times, and under all circumstances; if he chose, from an insight into the springs of human action, and those invariable principles which have ever produced the same result, he was sure ultimately to arrive at his object, though in the first instance he might seem to take a course not likely to attain it.

If, on the contrary, he chose from the pressure of the circumstances of the moment; if he sought for merely immediate support, without making sure of ultimate consequences; if he regarded expediency rather than principle; if he looked, in short, to temporary appearances, and even to existing facts, rather than to the laws by which facts are governed and events produced, he was sure to be thrown ultimately far from his object, though he might take that course which seemed to lead directly to it. Such was the conduct of Necker,—such unhappily was his choice.

The king, the court, the members of the government,—all fancied that the monarch would meet with support and assistance from the commons against the higher classes, by which they had hitherto been opposed. They imagined that the spirit of the American democracy had reached that lower class less than the upper; they imagined that the virtues of the monarch, and his sincere desire for the good of his people, were appreciated by the inferior classes, whom he had striven to benefit; and that the higher classes, whose unjust privileges and iniquitous exemptions no one was more disposed to assail than he was, were the natural opponents with whom he had to struggle; and such were certainly the appearances of those times. In aid of these views came the inherent prejudices of the Genevese banker, of the person who had been born in the bosom of a re-

public, who had sprung from amongst a people long accustomed to freedom and free institutions, who had received the first principles of his education where a democracy was used with habitual ease, and, having nothing to combat, enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace.

Under such circumstances, Necker chose his part, determined to rest the safety of the throne and the institutions of the country upon the attachment of the *tiers état*; and, without regarding the nobility, who had so frequently opposed the crown, absolutely as enemies, to do all that he could to diminish their authority and counterbalance their influence. He did not do this, however, as has been represented generally, without hesitation and without doubts. He did not secretly resolve from the first, as has been asserted, to double the number of the commons; but, on the contrary, if we may believe the account of that amiable and pious man Cicé, archbishop of Bordeaux, Necker, in the very first place, after the decision of the notables was known, determined, not indeed to leave the deputies of the *tiers état* only equal in number to the deputies of the clergy or to the deputies of the nobles separately, but merely to increase them, by adding to the number of deputies from great towns, so as to give them sufficient numerical importance to balance in some degree, but not control, the other orders.

What were the whole circumstances which induced him to change this plan will perhaps ever remain in doubt; but it is fully sufficient for the purposes of history that the archbishop of Bordeaux declared that he had seen the scheme drawn up by Necker's own hand, and that it was, at one time, positively and distinctly determined upon. He felt by no means certain of his conduct; he had by no means pre-determined to double the *tiers état*; he was by no means without great and terrible anxiety in regard to the result. One of the causes, however, which might make him resolve in the end to change his plan, was the

number of petitions and representations which poured in from the commons, beseeching him to double the number of their representatives. Nor were these petitions without a mixture of menaces. The commons threatened in different places to send ten deputies if two were refused them ; and though, in all probability, Necker was not weak enough to fear such results, it can scarcely be doubted that one of the causes of his ultimate determination was a reasonable apprehension of alienating from the government the only body which showed a strong disposition to support it.

At length, then, he determined upon doubling the number of the *tiers état*. But that step would have been less dangerous than it afterwards proved if it had not been coupled with another of the same character. After the question regarding the numbers of the commons was decided, it became necessary to consider what classes should be admitted into the representatives of the clergy, — whether the higher ranks of the church should be alone permitted to sit in the assembly of ecclesiastica. But Necker, having gone so far, resolved to fill up the measure ; and it was determined that the curates should be admitted into the body of the clergy — which step, in fact, clenched the doubling of the commons, by throwing a vast number of persons, who could only be considered in reality as belonging to the *tiers état*, into one of the two chambers, of nobles and clergy, which were supposed to balance the third estate. Thus did Necker, step by step, build up the ladder of the French revolution.

After a long pause, and all the doubts and agitations which we have mentioned, the council was assembled on the 27th September, 1788, and Necker read his report regarding the convention of the states-general. That famous and ruinous report, which at once doubled the number of the representatives of the commons, required no qualification, and introduced into the counterbalancing body a number of men who did not

naturally belong to it, and therewith the seeds of dissension and the certainty of disunion. The report received the king's sanction almost immediately, and thus became the law of election for the states-general, which were convened for the 27th of April of the following year, 1789.

An awful pause succeeded, and then loud and long gratulations were poured in upon Necker for the boon he had conceded to the people. The nobles, however, murmured loudly. They had been willing to stand as a barrier between the throne and the multitude, but the throne, doubting their sincerity from their past actions, threw the barrier down, declaring that it was as inconvenient to the king as to the people. The nobility of Britany refused to send deputies to the states under the new law; and throughout the country, the nobles, seeing themselves assailed from above as well as from below, considering themselves treated unjustly, perceiving that the popular fury would ultimately assail the throne, and not comprehending that they themselves would be first swept away in the course of the torrent, used no exertions for the purpose of employing the influence they still possessed to guard against evils to themselves and to the state, but suffered the elections to proceed in any course which circumstances laid open; and the consequence was, that a body of men were returned to the states-general, a great part of whom were not only imbued with the most democratic principles that Europe had ever seen—for that would have been comparatively a trifling evil—but filled with vague theories, wild enthusiasms, rash hypotheses, and virulent passions, which fitted many of them for a prison and many of them for a madhouse.

That there were men returned to that assembly; nay, that there were many men in every political party then existing, from the sternest republican to the most devoted lover of monarchy, good, wise, amiable, virtuous, seeking only their country's good, animated

solely by universal benevolence, matters not, when the great majority of that assembly, as of every other assembly, was composed of men to be led by their passions and prejudices, and when there were a vast number therein who had cunning, ambition, energy, and talents sufficient to employ these passions and prejudices for the promotion of evil and the destruction of civil order.

Necker, in some degree, saw that he had raised a tempest, and he evidently doubted whether he had provided a sufficient shelter to protect from its rage the monarch or himself. We are told by a person, whose word is not to be doubted, that a letter was written by the minister, shortly before the meeting of the states, in which were to be found these remarkable words:—“ I see the great wave advancing! can it be for the purpose of swallowing me up? ”

That which the great wave of the French revolution menaced was not so much Necker or the king, or any other private individual; but it was the French monarchy, the institutions of the country, nay, the existing institutions of the world. Doubtless, there were many abuses to be done away; doubtless, there were many ameliorations to be introduced; but the states-general, constituted as they then were, and coming to the task under the feelings and circumstances which then existed, were not the body that was competent to accomplish that task. A single huntsman, who runs down a wolf with an immense pack of hungry hounds, may kill the beast of prey, but will find it difficult to prevent the dogs from worrying the sheep as well as devouring their enemy.

The roar of applause with which the act of convening the states-general was received, not only in France, but throughout all Europe, only tended to render a dangerous spirit more dangerous, and to teach men who met for the purpose of innovation, to take a step further and reach destruction also. The revolution may be considered as having been decided by the constitution of the

states-general, and consequently it will scarcely be necessary in this place to enter deeply into the particulars of the transactions which followed; but there are two or three points, which greatly affected the private history of Necker, and which must be immediately mentioned.

In the first place, some severe storms in the course of 1788 desolated the country, and threatened to add famine to the other exciting causes of tumult and discontent. In the next place, the minds of all men being prepared for some great and extraordinary convulsions, multitudes of persons, to whom any change offered hope, any commotion promised relief, and any derangement of the social system held out the prospect of gain or deliverance, flocked from the provinces to Paris, and swelled the multitude of mouths to be fed without adding any thing to the means of production. Thus threatened with a famine from the failure of the crops, the French capital was thus overrun with useless and worse than useless strangers. Hence, even before the meeting of the states-general, the minister had three great evils to contend with—the disorder of the finances, the disorganisation of the people, and the scarcity in the capital. The winter proved dreadfully severe, and that of course added to the lamentable state into which every thing was plunged in the French metropolis.

In meeting these difficulties, Necker displayed all that kindness of heart and goodness of feeling, all those great talents for administration and for finance, which so peculiarly characterised him. In the short space of eight months, the most extraordinary improvement was perceptible in the finances; order and regularity were restored, and the most promising hopes were entertained that by his efforts, his popularity, his genius, and his integrity, he, unassisted, would be enabled to remedy the existing evils in that department of the state. Many persons even imagined that the meeting of the states-general might now be dis-

pensed with ; but Necker knew that to attempt to recede would be ruin itself, and therefore he prepared to meet them, though of course under more advantageous circumstances in consequence of the improved state of the treasury.

To remedy the scarcity in the capital, Necker exerted himself both as a minister and a man in efforts to relieve the necessities of the people. His wife, too, laboured indefatigably for the same object. The clergy joined their aid nobly and willingly, and multitudes were fed by the hand of kindness and benevolence, who came for the purposes of crime and plunder. In order to secure still greater relief to the people, Necker we are told engaged the famous house of Hope to undertake the general supply of Paris with provisions. That house, however, who saw the French monarchy on the eve of a great convulsion, feared that the enormous expenses attending on such an enterprise might never be defrayed by the government, and demanded the security of Necker himself. Necker, as a security, gave up two millions of his own private fortune, and consequently saved the French metropolis from some at least of the evils which menaced it.

To remedy the disorganisation of the people, was unfortunately beyond his power. Not even a forcible police existed in the capital ; and even had the most vigorous force existed, the disorganisation was moral, not physical.

After struggling with many difficulties, and undergoing many a painful mortification, not wholly trusted by the court, and not daring to rely entirely on the people, Necker at length saw the deputies of the states-general assemble in Paris, and beheld them meet on the 5th of May, 1789. He himself, on entering the assembly, was hailed by deafening shouts of applause, such as probably had never before greeted any minister of France. Necker opened the business of the states after the king's speech ; but the words of the monarch, and the words of Necker himself, did not satisfy the

people. Louis spoke vaguely, and Necker equally so. His finance statements were clear, methodical, candid, and striking : the reforms, which were necessary were touched upon with a more indefinite hand, keeping his own attention fixed, and endesavouring to turn the whole attention of the people, upon those financial derangements, which were in fact but a small point in an ocean of political difficulties. He did not approach the question, which all parties looked for with anxiety, of the method of taking the votes of the assembly ; but he became warm, energetic, and touching, when he spoke of the virtues of the king ; and he rose into high eloquence, when he painted the union which might take place between loyalty and patriotism.

The people received some parts of his oration with the utmost applause, and he seemed to carry all men with him ; but, upon consideration, his speech as a whole was looked upon as unsatisfactory. If, however, the opening of Necker was not what the people expected, the sight of the assembly which he had called around him could not be very pleasing to himself. The *tiers état* outnumbered the other two orders of the state united, and amongst the clergy were a body of two hundred and ten curates, who might be considered as belonging in fact to the commons. Neither amongst the commons did there appear many of those distinguished men, literary or scientific, with which France at that period abounded. The great body of that powerful division of the states, which ruled and swallowed up the others, consisted almost entirely of lawyers. Of five hundred and sixty-five persons, who composed the representatives of the commons, there were no less than three hundred and forty-one, either lawyers absolutely without landed property and station, or persons who had risen to the rank of magistrate by their efforts at the bar. Few, if any, of the curés had any property whatsoever, and thus, in fact, not the slightest influence was given in the assembly to the property on which they had met to impose taxation.

The mercantile class and the agriculturist, the manufacturer and the landed proprietor, were all inadequately represented in the states-general. The merchants and farmers had only one hundred and seventy-six of their body in an assembly, consisting of eleven hundred and twenty-eight persons. The question then may be, who then was really represented in that assembly? and the reply is easy—The greedy and unproductive classes of a poor and embarrassed country. It is true, that the clergy had a certain body of representatives, that the landed proprietors had a certain body of representatives, that the productive classes—the farmers, the manufacturers, the merchants—had also their body of representatives; but each of these was as nothing compared with those powerful classes, which held together as one body, decided every question by their own weight, and overruled every effort of all the other bodies to obviate the preponderance which had been previously given to the representatives of the ~~need~~, the idleness, and the greediness of the nation.

Such considerations must have forced themselves upon Necker, as he gazed round upon the assembly which he had called into being; but it was now too late to seek for any remedy. He himself could not even attempt to interfere, and the only hope of a corrective of the evil ingredients of the assembly, was, that the nobles and clergy would hold firm to a resolution, already anticipated, of deliberating and voting separately from the commons. But Necker, in the whole of these affairs, was out of his element. He was an excellent financier, a wise administrator, an amiable and an honest man; but he was not at all fitted for the fierce contentions of party, for leading or governing fiery popular assemblies, for setting limits to their rage, or for directing their efforts to objects where they might be beneficial and not injurious.

On the very question which we have just touched upon,—of the separation of the assembly into

three classes, Dumont points out a great error which Necker committed. The painter of Mirabeau shows that the minister was wrong in not at once deciding the question one way or the other, and he says, "If the king had ordered the union of the chambers, he would have had the commons for him; if he had ordered the separation of the chambers, he would have had the nobles and clergy on his part. Men would not have dared to begin the states-general by an open disobedience of the orders of the king, who was regarded as provisional legislator. But in taking no decided part, the government threw open the lists to the combatants, and the royal authority necessarily remained a prey for the conqueror."

In this view, Dumont is certainly right, but he might have gone farther still. Necker should not only have decided the question, but he should have decided it in favour of separation. He would then have gained something,—he would have succeeded in raising some barrier between the throne and the popular torrent. All that the crown had to fear from the nobles was gone by. The very elections for the states-general had caused a reaction in that body, who now felt very generally that they had gone too far. The crown might therefore certainly have trusted to support from them at this period if it gave them support in return; and, by the union of the two, something might have been resisted when the demands of the *tiers état* became unreasonable.

Necker, however, not having perceived that which all popular convulsions show,—that the men who put themselves at the head of a rushing multitude are almost sure to be the first knocked down and trodden upon,—was more disposed, both by principle and habit, to lead the popular movement than to retard it; and although he saw the danger of the union of the chambers, and undoubtedly wished that it could be prevented, he did not think that the government could interfere without the loss of his own popularity, and

that of the king, which he still regarded as the only barriers of the state.

The chambers then assembled at Versailles, and after their first opening, the nobles and the clergy retired to separate halls, and verified their powers. The commons, remaining in the great hall of assembly, declared that it was incompetent for any class to verify its powers without the others, and waited for the nobles and clergy to join them for that purpose. There was no formal debate at first upon the subject, but the *tiers état* simply waited, declaring that they could not constitute themselves into an assembly without the presence of the other bodies of the states. The situation in which they remained is forcibly depicted by Dumont :— “When I went into the hall of the states-general,” he says, “there was neither any subject of deliberation, nor any order whatsoever.” The deputies did not know each other, but were beginning to make acquaintance. They were scattered about indifferently ; they had chosen the eldest members to preside ; they passed the day in waiting, in discussing little incidents, in listening to the public news, while the deputies of the provinces were making acquaintance with Versailles.”

In this state, Necker weakly left the affairs of the state, not remembering that, with a resisting body, such as the *tiers état*, delay is success, success is strength, and that strength, begetting activity, leads from defence to aggression. Every day the power of the *tiers état* increased ; the nobility, and the clergy more especially, in consequence of the popular elements introduced into the latter body, were ill disposed towards each other, were each full of contentions in their own bosom, and were by no means disposed to unite in one chamber. While the commons remained daily increasing in inert vigour, the two other estates passed their time in empty discussions and detrimental debates ; and the only reasonable proposal which was made, was that of the marquis de Montesquieu, who suggested that the nobles and the clergy should

petition the king to unite them into one body, in order to resist the power of the *trois état*, who had by this time roused themselves into activity, and had assumed the title of the National Assembly, verifying their powers, and constituting themselves, without the presence of the two other orders. The proposal of Montesquieu was scarcely supported by a single voice; but in the mean time a negotiation was going on, which, by binding to the interests of Necker and the king a man who was destined to lead the *trois état* during his life, might have given a complete turn to the affairs of the nation.

Mirabeau, the famous Mirabeau, was in the first instance despised and insulted by the *trois état*. His honesty was less than doubtful, his reputation was at the lowest ebb, even his talents were undervalued. But those who knew him well saw beyond, and seemed to feel as a conviction, that the very assembly, which at first murmured him down when he attempted to raise his voice, would afterwards hang upon all his words, and suffer him to dictate its decrees. These friends, zealous in reality for the safety of the country, determined to effect, if possible, an union between Necker and Mirabeau, and for that purpose introduced them to each other.

Mirabeau, like De Retz, was well disposed to receive any benefits or favours from the court, if it could be done without the sacrifice of popularity. Necker, we are told, promised him on this occasion, the post of ambassador to Constantinople as the price of his supporting the government, and Mirabeau, on returning from their interview, which was the first he had ever had with Necker, declared, with a mixture of sincerity and sarcasm, that the minister was a good man, and that people had done him great wrong in imputing to him either malice or profoundity. But the popularity which Mirabeau speedily acquired in the national assembly gave him greater hopes and purposes than those which Necker had held out; and at the same time that his position was

changing with the *tiers état*, the position of Necker was changing with the court.

A number of the nobles who surrounded the king were now pressing him to employ violent means ; and while Necker was drawing up a constitution of a liberal and enlightened character to be proposed to the states-general, the court was preparing measures calculated to irritate the commons to the highest degree at a moment of the most extraordinary excitement. It had been determined that the king should meet the national assembly on the 23d of June ; but in order to prevent the commons from gaining any accession of strength, or proceeding any further with their attacks upon the other orders, the courtiers led the king to make a rash attempt for the purpose of staying any farther discussions, by closing the hall of the assembly, till the day on which it had been determined that Louis should present a new constitution to the people. There is every reason to believe that Necker had very little, if any thing, to do with this part of the arrangement. He laboured anxiously and zealously to perfect the plan to be proposed ; but it would seem certain, that notwithstanding Mirabeau's doubtful character, the minister would have done wisely to communicate to him, and through him to the representatives, the liberal scheme of reform which the king was willing to concede.

On the 20th of June, a herald proclaimed that the king would meet the states on the 23d. The doors of the hall were closed immediately, and sentinels placed thereat. This forcible suspension of their functions roused, at once, the *tiers état* ; the president, Bailly, led the deputies to the doors of the hall, and demanding admission, protested against their exclusion : then adjourning to a tennis court, he declared, that wherever the deputies were, there was the national assembly, and proposed an oath to his colleagues to the effect, that they should never separate, or, if forced to do so, should always re-assemble, till the great object of their meeting was accomplished. Such was the celebrated oath of the tennis court.

On the 22d of the month, as might have been expected from the constitution of the body, one hundred and forty-eight members of the body of the clergy united themselves to the *tiers état* in the church of St. Louis. On the next day, the hall of the assembly was again opened, and the king took his place on the throne, amidst a gloomy silence, very different from that which had greeted him on his first appearance in the states. But what was the surprise of all, to find that Necker, his prime minister, did not accompany him to the meeting, — that Necker, who was supposed to have drawn up the plan which was to be announced, who had rendered it as liberal as the heart of any honest man could desire, and more liberal than many an honest and wise man thought safe, was not there to receive the applauses of a people who loved him, and of deputies who owed to him their functions and their importance.

The fact was, however, that those secret councillors whom we have spoken of elsewhere had been busily at work, changing, altering, undoing the scheme which Necker had drawn up for the relief and satisfaction of the people. Almost every article that it contained was changed ; and though some of the words and some of the arrangements of Necker were left, sufficient, indeed, to enable those who altered it to give it out as his plan, yet the whole substance and the whole object was changed.

When Necker found that such was the case, and that the king was about to commit himself with his people, by proposing to them a plan which would not only give them no satisfaction, but which was desultory, incongruous, and ill drawn up, his mind was agitated by the most contrary emotions. He was disposed to stand by Louis till the last ; he was disposed to show to the monarch firm, unshaken, steadfast attachment, even when that monarch did him wrong ; and we are assured that, after having for some time been disposed not to sanction by his presence a proceeding he condemned, he had yielded to his regard for Louis, and was preparing

to set out to accompany the king, when he was stopped by a body of his most respectable friends, who knew the circumstances, and assured him that, by so doing, he would not only compromise his safety, but his honour. Necker yielded to their opinion, and his seat was left void.

Amidst the contrariety of assertions, it is scarcely possible to ascertain what parts of the king's speech were not Necker's; but it would seem positively certain, that that part which abrogated the privileges of the nobility in regard to taxation, &c., — that part which put an end to the *taille*, fixed the expenses of the royal household, regulated various subjects concerning the national debt, granted the liberty of the press, proposed reforms in the criminal code, secured personal freedom and equality of civil rights and contributions, — that that part was Necker's. Whether the clauses which regulated the meeting of the several orders in their separate chambers were Necker's or not, cannot be told; but it seems very improbable that the threatening language that was put into the king's mouth, and the command immediately to separate, in order to meet again the next day in their several chambers, were framed by the same minister who made such vast concessions to the people.

Necker knew, that to threaten without power to punish or to act, was unwise; and though he might have had recourse to remonstrances, there remains a moral conviction upon most minds, that he was not one to counsel menaces. No personal insult, however, was on this occasion shown to the king; no reply was made; and he parted from the assembly, ordering them to separate. But they did not separate. The clergy and the nobles retired; but the *tiers état* remained in deliberation, and when the marquis of Brèze, master of the ceremonies, entered, and reminded them of the orders of the king, Mirabeau rose, and with all the foam and fury of popular declamation, replied, that the commons of France were resolved to deliberate; and then,

after pouring forth some insulting language upon Brèze, he ended by saying,

“ Go, tell your master that we are here by the power of the people, and that nothing shall drive us forth but the force of bayonets.”

Such was the furious speech with which Mirabeau commenced the first direct resistance to the royal authority ; but in the mean time, another act was taking place, still more dangerous at that moment to the state. Necker had received an order to be present at the assembly. He had descended to the hall of his abode, we are told, for the purpose of obeying, but the representations of his friends had confirmed his own opinions. He had at length determined on not obeying, and consequently immediately sent in his resignation. No sooner was it known that this had taken place, than a popular tumult broke forth. The king, the queen, the whole of the royal family—even the very courtiers who had frustrated his plans and opposed his measures—all perceived that the country was lost if the resignation of Necker was accepted. The queen sent for him, and in a long conference besought him to recall his resignation. She used her utmost eloquence ; she employed every argument ; she assured him in the most solemn terms that his counsels should be followed implicitly ; and at a moment when those counsels could by no means save the state, which his own faults and those of others had rolled over the brink of the precipice, Necker resumed the functions which he exercised in vain.

The people were already crowding round the palace at Versailles ; agitation and apprehension lest his resignation should be accepted had spread through all ranks and classes ; tumults and confusion already existed in Paris ; and when, at length, Necker, issuing forth from the royal apartments, informed the people that he had resumed his office, the loudest acclamations rent the air, and the multitude carried, rather than conducted, him home in triumph. Nevertheless, although the scene was one which touched his heart and affected his feelings, Necker

did not suffer himself to be deceived in regard to the durability of that frail thing — popularity. We learn from an eye-witness that he said to his friends, who were waiting for him at the door of his cabinet, " I remain ! but you see the people, who follow me with benedictions — before fourteen days are over, perhaps they will drive me forth with stones."

The prediction was not exactly verified ; for it was not the people on this occasion who failed so suddenly ; but it was a body not less unstable, not less versatile, and certainly more treacherous. The court betrayed him. The promise which the queen had made him, that his counsels should be followed, was not kept, though Necker fully and entirely relied upon that promise. In agreeing to remain in office, he trusted completely to the known goodness of heart of the king, and to those virtues and good qualities, which, however mingled with foibles, still existed in noble abundance in the heart of Marie Antoinette.

The events of that day were not over when Necker returned to his own dwelling. A scene was yet to be enacted, which must have long remained impressed upon his memory. The people who had been waiting for his return — the friends who were assembled at his house, were made aware, almost as soon as it had taken place, that he had consented to remain in office ; but the deputies of the *tiers état*, whose admiration and regard were only increased by the events which had occurred, and, whether royalists or republicans, were terribly agitated at the news of his resignation, were longer in hearing that he had withdrawn it. The moment that they did learn it, an immense number of them flocked at once to his abode ; and the tumult of joy and gratulation which occurred, the enthusiasm with which they poured forth the expression of their love and regard, quite overpowered the minister, who could only reply, while the deputies of the commons held his hands and moistened them with joyful tears, " Gentlemen confide in the king. Gentlemen, give the king cause to

love the states-general." The universal exclamation, was, " Yes, yes, we do love the king ! Yes, yes, we will confide in him and in you !"

Necker at that moment seems to have gained some degree of confidence; and to have believed that the course of the torrent, if it could not be stemmed, might at least be followed in safety. But, as we have said, the promise which the queen had made was not kept. Not only were the counsels of Necker not followed implicitly and alone, but machinations were suffered against him. Other counsellors surrounded the king; and the monarch, whose vain trust in his popularity was now extinguished, determined to employ those measures which might once have succeeded in rendering him a despot, for the purpose of preventing him, when too late, from becoming a slave.

It was determined to have recourse to the army, and to coerce the national assembly by force of arms. All the orders of that assembly had by this time been united in one chamber. The nobles and clergy who remained true to their order were overwhelmed by the majority of the commons; the king's commands had been disobeyed in every respect, and his authority set at nought; tumults were of daily occurrence in the capital, and disaffection was spreading through all the troops in Paris and its neighbourhood. Such was the period at which the king determined upon casting himself into the arms of the soldiers; but those who advised him to take that step demanded, as the condition of its success, that Necker should be banished. Louis, who had been weak enough to employ a minister without giving him his full confidence, was weak enough to consent to his dismissal at the moment he was most necessary; and on the 11th of July, about three o'clock in the day, Necker received an order from the king to quit the kingdom immediately.

The new ministers, we are told, had even gone so far as to propose that he whom they had supplanted should be arrested; fearing, they said, some commo-

tion at his departure, in consequence of his immense popularity. The king, however, who knew his minister well, and the straightforward sincerity of his intentions, expressed his conviction that Necker would himself take measures to prevent the evils that his enemies at the court feared. He contented himself, therefore, with adding to the note informing Necker that he was compelled to dismiss him, a request that he would quit the country with as little publicity as possible ; and Necker prepared to obey to the letter.

His feelings, indeed, must have been strongly mingled ones of joy and sadness at this announcement of his banishment — of joy at his own deliverance from the most perilous situation that it is possible to conceive, and of sadness at the inevitable fate which he saw must await a master whom he loved. After receiving the king's note, he dined with his family and a party of friends, and no one perceived upon his countenance the slightest change. He was accustomed shortly after dinner to take an airing in his carriage during the cool of the evening, and the vehicle was ordered at the usual hour. On rising from the table he informed his wife in a whisper of what had taken place, and told her to prepare secretly for departure. When the carriage was at the door, they both got in, as if to take their usual drive ; and not till he was at some distance from his dwelling did he order the coachman to drive to the next post-house. Post-horses were immediately put to the carriage, and, travelling night and day, Necker was out of France and in the city of Brussels before the public, his friends, or even his own daughter, knew that he was banished. Thus honestly and nobly did he on all occasions execute what he believed to be his duty.

His purpose was, in the very first instance, to deliver the king from the dangers of his presence in France, by making his exit by the shortest road, and then to proceed through Germany to Switzerland. But his journey is in various respects very remarkable. From Brussels he wrote to the house of Hope, to inform them that,

though no longer minister, he still remained security for their advances in supplying the capital of France, according to the terms before agreed upon. He then proceeded by the course of the Rhine towards his native country, but, accidentally stopping at Basle, he was suddenly surprised by meeting the famous madame de Polignac, the queen's most favoured friend.

She had been one, there can be no doubt, of the principals in the cabal against him, and she had fled from France since Necker himself quitted it. Their meeting in such a situation—the one an exile from her native land, the other banished from the country of his adoption—greatly changed their feelings towards each other; and Necker, going into the apartments of the duchess, held with her a long conversation. From her he learned, for the first time, the events which had taken place subsequent to his departure from Paris. To those events it is now necessary to turn, as upon them depends one of the most important events in the life of the minister. That Necker had lost favour with the court some time before his departure, had been well known to the people, and especially to the national assembly; and Dumont gives the following picture of the state of the public mind during the week or ten days which preceded Necker's banishment.

"They did not doubt of the personal intentions of the king, but they believed him to be led and deceived. There was a plan formed, which continued to develope itself—a plan of which men neither knew the object nor the extent. Minor menacing suggestions, an air of insult, all that announced a *coup d'état*,—the movement of troops, the nocturnal visits of the officers to the *corps de garde*, secret councils at the court to which Necker was not summoned, and a multitude of details of the same kind, composed the events of the day, which were exaggerated and perverted by inquietude and alarm. People were not yet sufficiently bold to talk of a conspiracy of the court: that expression was invented after the victory; but there was a general feeling of apprehension."

Such was the state of the public feeling in Paris and at Versailles, when it suddenly became known to the people and the assembly, that Necker was not only dismissed but banished. The crowd in the Palais Royal was immense. The theatres were instantly closed, and the word, "to arms, to arms," was heard in every part of Paris. The famous Camille Desmoulins harangued the people in the gardens of the palace, and declared that the dismissal of Necker was a signal for the massacre of the patriots. He called upon the crowd to follow his example; and, breaking off a bough from one of the trees, he placed it in his hat as the badge of revolution. The multitude followed, and flew to arms; the bust of Necker was carried in procession through the streets; some ineffectual skirmishes took place between the troops and the people; the French guards and a very large body of infantry went over to the insurgents; the multitude armed themselves in every direction; pikes were forged and distributed to all who required them, and, on the 14th of July, 1789, the first seal was put to the revolution of France, by the capture of the Bastille.

Then too the signs of that brutal and sanguinary frenzy, which became one of the most remarkable symptoms of the moral disease under which the French nation were beginning to labour, first displayed themselves. The heads of persons who had surrendered only on promises of safety were hewn off, the bodies were hung upon the lamp chains, the heads and the hands of the victims were fixed upon pikes, and the bloody insurrection of Paris was fully begun. It soon became known to the king that the capital was in actual revolt, that a considerable number of the household troops had joined the people, that the citizens of Paris were armed and organising themselves, and that a great part of the troops of the line refused to act against the multitude.

Still Louis had a very considerable force absolutely at his disposal. Various cities and parts of the country were well disposed towards the royal cause, and many

large bodies of men strongly disapproved of the measures of his adversaries. Thus there was one chance still left for Louis XVI., — to gather together those troops which could be depended upon, — to call around him his military nobility, — to throw himself upon the support of the royalist part of the population, and strive for the restoration of his authority and the safety of his crown in the sanguinary field of civil war.

Louis XVI., however, was not a military king. Though possessed undoubtedly of a personal contempt for death, he was not an actively courageous man. He had also a quality, which, in his circumstances, and perhaps in any king of France, is the most dangerous one that can be possessed, a great abhorrence of blood-shed. James II. is said to have exclaimed, "Oh spare my English subjects." Louis XVI. declared, that he would rather spill his own blood than the blood of his people. He chose his part, — to submit to the utmost exactions of the nation, rather than to carry out, vigorously and to the end, the measures which had been prepared for employing force.

The results to him were lamentable, and to France equally so ; but yet he was wise as well as humane in so choosing ; for he had neither the genius, the activity, the experience, the determination, nor the commanding character necessary to enter upon a civil war, — under disadvantageous circumstances to carry it through successfully, — to wear out opposition and cause faction to expire by determined resistance, and by skill, energy, perseverance, and good intentions, to bring the strife so soon to a conclusion, that the terrible remedy employed might prove a less evil than the terrible disease. The ministers whom he had chosen were impeached by the people, — the nobility fled in troops from the capital, and emigrated to foreign countries, and the duchess of Polignac, directing her flight towards Basle, accidentally met with Necker at an inn in that town, and conveyed to him the news that Louis had withdrawn the troops from the capital, and cast himself entirely into the hands of the people.

Scarcely had the minister received this intelligence, when it was announced to him, that a messenger had arrived from Paris, seeking him ; and two letters were put into his hand, the one from the king and the other from the national assembly, beseeching him to return immediately, and take upon himself the conduct of affairs. Necker saw before him nothing but danger and difficulty. His wife strongly pressed him to refuse to return. She showed him that he had twice trusted and been twice deceived, that he had been met with nothing but ingratitude and suspicion, when his services should have commanded thankfulness and confidence, and she assured him that he could not serve the king, and might destroy himself. Madame de Polignac, on the other hand, exhorted him to go, and told him that it was his duty ; and Necker, who, with a full knowledge of the dangers, had already determined upon his conduct, replied, " Yes, madame, I will obey the dictates of my duty ; but in so doing, I know that I sacrifice myself."

He accordingly set out immediately for the capital. If any thing could have consoled him under the feeling of terrible responsibility which he incurred, it must have been the universal joy with which he was greeted on his passage towards Paris. The municipal officers of the towns came forth in procession to meet him, the people drew his carriage a great part of the way from the frontier to the metropolis, crowds of women and children threw themselves upon their knees as he passed, and one continual triumph ushered him back to the head of the government. At the town of Nogent, however, where he stopped for a short time, he received a letter from the baron de Bezenval, who had been proceeding to Switzerland, for the purpose of making his escape from the French populace, who sought his life. He had been arrested on the road, although he bore a passport from the king ; and the people of the commune were about to send him back to Paris, where his fate would have been instantly sealed.

Necker, however, commanded the municipal officers,

in the king's name, to delay all steps till they received orders from the capital, and he had sufficient authority to induce them to obey. He then proceeded as rapidly as possible towards Versailles, where he arrived on the 20th of July, after an absence of eighteen days. But as he approached the abode of the kings of France, however, Necker heard of the scenes of sanguinary fury which were then becoming familiar to the capital. He heard that the best, the most powerful, the most popular of the leaders of the national assembly were utterly impotent to stop the bloodshed, or to calm the storm. He doubted whether he himself could do any thing to stem the torrent of crime. He soon felt sure that he could not; and, as he acknowledges himself, before he reached Versailles, he turned his eyes towards Basle overflowing with tears.

Still, the acclamations that greeted him wherever he appeared; still, the universal joy that spread over every countenance at his approach; still, the hopes that seemed to spring up in the bosom of almost every party at his coming, were sufficient, not only to console Necker for the risk he ran, but to make him consider his journey back to France as the most triumphant event of his whole life. It seemed as if nothing could be added to carry that triumph to a higher pitch, and when he re-entered his apartments at Versailles, he turned to one of his friends, exclaiming, "This is the moment in which I ought to die."

The very next day he hastened to Paris, where immense multitudes were assembled to receive him, and passing through the Place de Grève, he went straight to the Hôtel de Ville, in which the electors of the capital were assembled. Two hundred thousand people filled the square, and rent the air with acclamations at the appearance of the most popular minister that ever lived. The first use which Necker made of his popularity was, a glorious endeavour to stop the effusion of blood, and disarm the rancour of political fanaticism. He besought the assembly not only to spare the life of Bezenval, who

had been one of his strongest opponents while in power, but to grant a general amnesty. At that moment, Necker was all-powerful in Paris, and with one general shout of the whole multitude his request was granted.

A decree was immediately pronounced by the electors, and received with the utmost enthusiasm by the people, declaring, that the day on which a minister so dear and so necessary was restored to France ought to be held as a grand festival,—that consequently the capital pardoned all its enemies, and henceforth regarded as the only enemies of the nation those who disturbed the public tranquillity.

This, indeed, was the most triumphant day of Necker's life, for on it, by the love of a whole nation, he had been enabled to carry the only measure which could save that nation from anarchy and massacre. He had exerted the greatest portion that probably ever was known of the most intoxicating kind of power that man can receive, for the noblest, the most philanthropic of purposes. But this day was indeed the day on which Necker should have died, for it was the last day of his useful power, and the rest of his ministry was agony,—the rest of his life was mourning.

No sooner were the events which had taken place known to the demagogues of the national assembly, than two things were determined in the midnight cabals, which were held for the purpose of directing the course of the revolution. The first of these was to rescind the amnesty ; the second—if we may employ a word which was manufactured for the occasion—to *unpopularize Necker*. The dark, unprincipled, furious Mirabeau led the way ; the lower orders of Paris, the scum of a vicious metropolis, excited into demoniac fury by new elements of passion, new scope for crime, were employed by the demagogues to overawe and intimidate the electors, while, from the manufactories of libels and falsehoods established by Mirabeau, poured forth every thing that could alarm, excite, or envenom the minds of the people ; and that mighty demon himself urged the national

assembly to annul the decree of amnesty, and deny the right of the electors to vote it. With specious art and poisonous eloquence, he seemed to be advocating order, when he was giving the greatest rein to the passions of the people. A farce of hearing pleadings at the bar of the assembly was enacted ; and that body, after listening to all that the moderate and the wise could say, solemnly rescinded the amnesty, and gave the populace a tacit permission to murder and destroy.

In the meanwhile, confusion, anarchy, and bloodshed spread throughout the country. Man seemed to have lost all the attributes of humanity. The young, the old, the wise, the foolish, the guilty, the innocent, were put to death, without the slightest discrimination. But the infliction of death was not sufficient to gratify the people. There were persons who were cut into small pieces before the face of their pregnant wives ; there were persons half burnt before they were drowned ; there were others who were eaten by their murderers. Law and order were all at an end together, and the consequences of anarchy were felt in the most fearful aggravation of the miseries of a whole people, who, even before they burst into frenzy, had been supported with difficulty. Commercial ruin, private distress, general famine,—three evils which almost uniformly follow great popular convulsions, succeeded rapidly, towards the close of the melancholy year 1789.

Still, however, Necker struggled on, resolved that, now he had cast himself into the arena, he would strive to the very last for the great objects he had in view. But those objects every day became more humble and less in number. On the 4th of August he had determined upon the persons who were to form the ministry ; he himself proposed them to the national assembly, and the proposal was received with loud acclamations. Neither Mirabeau nor Sieyès was present, and for a moment it seemed as if Necker could have commanded every thing. But a few casual words, spoken soon after by a person of no consequence, frustrated the

first financial operations of Necker, who had proposed a loan of thirty millions, in order to be enabled to afford some relief to the suffering multitudes, who were already beginning to starve. The discussion went on to other matters, and in that sitting the laws, constitution, customs, and even prejudices of the whole monarchy were overthrown at once. In this course, the assembly proceeded, while during the same period the people were dying of famine in the streets of Paris; and no one step was taken by the states to provide sufficient funds for the relief of the temporary distress.

The discussions of the assembly on the rights of man, &c. are not within the sphere of this book; but a very important measure, in the pursuit of which Necker had his share, must not be passed over in silence. The national assembly, after having destroyed the whole constitution of the country, proceeded to construct a new one, and one of the principal questions became, whether the king should or should not have the power of sanctioning the laws enacted by the assembly. It was proposed in the first instance that the king should have an absolute veto. But it was very soon perceived, that that was not likely to be granted, or, at all events, Necker believed that it would not; and some persons have even supposed that he was opposed to the measure itself, thinking that it would bring the king too frequently into a contest with the people, at a time of such very great excitement.

Under these circumstances, he proposed a suspensive or conditional veto, and suffered the question to be discussed in public, before he brought it under the eyes of the assembly. But the chambers decided that the memorial which he wished ultimately to present to them should not be read; and by one of those strange turns which events were continually taking in the revolution, the assembly which had so furiously assailed the monarchy, decreed the veto by a majority of two to one, Mirabeau himself speaking in its favour, and yet declining to vote upon the question.

In the mean time, no money was to be procured by the crown. The assembly in vain endeavoured to raise any for the necessities of the state ; the public credit was gone, and little or nothing could be obtained. The starvation still continued, the treasury was empty, the royal plate melted down ; and Necker determined, with bold firmness, to go down to the assembly, to lay before them a clear and convincing statement of the national disasters, and to demand of the persons who so loudly cried out for self devotion, the prompt and immediate sacrifice of the fourth part of the income of each individual for the support of the state.

To the surprise of many in the assembly, Mirabeau himself started forth to support the proposal of Necker, and in a speech, full of the most splendid eloquence, advocated the measure in such a manner as to admit of no reply. The friends of Necker, indeed, imagined, and it has since been very generally believed, that the popular leader solely desired to cast upon Necker the whole responsibility of a sort of tax, which would be difficult to collect, and might very possibly fail altogether ; and his after-conduct in regard to the same measure seemed to justify that suspicion ; for when the project of Necker had been submitted to the committee of finance, Mirabeau proposed it should be received by the assembly with a declaration that they had not had time to examine it, but received it with the confidence due to the plans of monsieur Necker. He even so far succeeded, as to cause part of this absurd proposal to be adopted ; but those who wished well to the minister had sufficient influence to correct the amendment of Mirabeau, by adding, that the project was received on the report of the committee of finance.

I am not inclined to believe, however, that Mirabeau was actuated by the sinister motives attributed to him ; he seems to have been without principle of any kind, moral or political ; with powerful talents, and frequently good impulses, springing, like a tiger, with his immense strength, at the object directly before him, but moved

alone by such impulses, and changing objects and purposes without hesitation or thought. It would seem certain, indeed, that not long after this time various efforts were made by the court to gain Mirabeau to its side, and it has been even asserted, that Necker had consented to give him a seat in the ministry. The transaction is, of course, obscure ; but if Mirabeau ever entertained the expectation of becoming minister, it soon vanished before a decree of the national assembly, which pronounced that no minister could hold a seat within its walls. Without that seat, Mirabeau knew that his power was at an end, and that he would be as useless to the court, and as soon thrown aside, as a sword without a point.

In the mean time, however, to Mirabeau the people attributed every popular measure, whether his or not, and the court every democratic measure, however odious. The popularity of Necker was on the decline, the famine in Paris increasing, the tumults and outrages throughout the kingdom unabated, law was no longer respected in any instance where it opposed passion, and the reign of anarchy was complete. The people, indeed, and the national assembly, still affected to reverence the authority of the king, and believed they did so ; but they revered nothing but the memory of what kings had been ; and though the monarch possessed the veto, all real power was gone. Whether that veto was to be of any effect or not was soon put to the proof. Several acts were decreed by the national assembly subversive of every principle by which Louis could hope to reign, and a sort of commentary was drawn up upon the claims of the people, filled with abstract principles of very doubtful import, and called the " Declaration of the Rights of Man."

To this, as well as to the general tenour of nineteen articles of a new constitution, which had been framed by the assembly, Louis XVI. objected, and Necker strongly urged him to put his veto upon them. It was an act which the assembly itself had authorised him

to perform,— it was one which he owed to his station and to his people. The minister himself prepared the way, by drawing up a long series of eloquent observations upon the plan proposed, and laying them before the assembly itself; but the king still hesitated to pronounce his absolute veto, and an event was now rapidly approaching, which deprived the king of the power of acting freely, either as a man or as a monarch. The well-known banquet at Versailles took place, in which the chivalrous enthusiasm of those officers and soldiers who remained faithful to the king unfortunately broke forth in public and useless demonstrations, instead of taking the form of united action and considerate determination. The health of the king and the royal family was drank with enthusiasm, the magnificent air of “ Oh Richard ! Oh mon roi ! ” was played and sung, the tricoloured cockade was cast down as the emblem of disloyalty, the white cockade was raised as the symbol of truth and devotion.

Before this time, there can be little doubt that a project had been formed for the purpose of carrying the king to Metz, and of calling round him all that was loyal in France, annulling the acts of the constituent assembly, and, in fact, rallying the good feeling of the nation in favour of the king. There can be no doubt, either, that now that the people had beheld the excesses to which revolutionary violence tended, they had a much less sincere admiration for the states-general than that which they had conceived before the states-general had assembled, and that multitudes would have supported the king, if he had demanded their aid, assuring them at the same time a rational degree of liberty. There can be no doubt, either, that Mirabeau approved the project which had been formed, and was ready to have given the support of his popularity to the monarch, while Necker added what still remained of his.

However hopeful the scheme might have been in other respects, it was rendered utterly vain by the character of the king himself. That monarch did not even possess the

inert power of resistance, so that the active power of resistance was as little to be hoped of him as the strength of aggression. It would appear that the consideration of his character, more than any other circumstance, induced the proposers of the plan to abandon it; but notwithstanding its speedy relinquishment, a rumour of the king's intentions had got abroad so generally as to alarm the people of the capital; and that rumour, joined with the military enthusiasm displayed at Versailles, afforded sufficient elements for the tools of the duke of Orleans and the leaders of the jacobin faction in the assembly to work with, for the purpose of exciting the people to new tumults, and to fresh insults to the royal authority.

It has generally been supposed, that the duke of Orleans had in view to frighten Louis XVI. into a precipitate and unprepared retreat; but the whole affair is involved in mystery, and the only thing clearly ascertained seems to be, that the agents of the duke certainly did labour to excite the passions of the people. Mirabeau has been suspected of taking a share in the same events; but, I sincerely believe, without any just cause. There can be scarcely a doubt that he was by this time in confidential communication with the court; and, although undoubtedly unprincipled, there is no reason to believe him to be capable of so base an act of treachery.

However that might be, the storm was soon raised, the people flocked down tumultuously to Versailles, every thing that was vicious, every thing that was brutal, every thing that was unprincipled, hurried towards the palace of the king, for the purposes of massacre and plunder. The national assembly was sitting; but it took no measures to stay the torrent that poured on: one continual stream, of the base, not alone in station, but in character, continued to flow into Versailles, and the great square in the neighbourhood of the palace was speedily filled with a multitude crying for bread, but in fact, half drunk with wine, and gnawed by desires far more devouring than famine itself. Between five and six

o'clock they began to appear before the palace, and in a very short time the whole square was filled.

The regiment of Flanders and the national guard of Versailles were immediately called out to protect the palace from the multitude, the king's body guard on foot and on horseback were drawn up in the court, and the king himself, who was absent at the time, returned with all speed to the palace, and hastened to consult with his ministers upon what was to be done. By this time the rabble had poured into the hall of the states-general, and interrupted all their deliberations ; the galleries were occupied by fishwives, and the body of the hall itself was filled with armed men, so that all was confusion and anarchy. In the mean time, the councils at Versailles were hesitating and confused. The greater part of the courtiers of Louis besought him to fly while it was yet practicable ; to call about him his faithful guard ; to have his carriages brought round as speedily as possible, and to place himself and the royal family in safety.

Necker, on the contrary, we are assured, advised him to remain, representing to him that such a step would be a confirmation of all the disorders which had previously taken place, the very result desired by the Orleans party, and the signal for anarchy to become general and permanent throughout France. Louis, as usual, hesitated ; but the carriages were ordered to be brought round ; and it seems certain, that he intended to send away the queen and the royal family, if not to fly himself. The people, however, cut the traces of the carriages. News was brought that the national guard, under Lafayette, were marching from Paris. The regiment of Flanders, which had held firm hitherto, began to waver in its loyalty ; the queen declared that she would never quit her husband under such circumstances, and Louis determined to remain, especially when he found that the count d'Estaing, one of his most determined and daring officers, declared that it was impossible to disperse the people at the point by which it was necessary for the royal party to pass out of Versailles.

To remain, without obtaining some assistance, appeared to all to be courting destruction ; and the question became whether the king should or should not submit to the dictation of the assembly, and accept the objectionable articles, and the declaration of the rights of man. Mounier, the sincere and upright president of the assembly, strongly advised the king to give his complete and full adhesion to the laws voted by that assembly, promising, it would seem, in case of any further act of violence, to accompany the king and royal family in flight, with all the other deputies who had the well-being of France really at heart. The queen, it appeared, opposed this advice. What was the clear and definitive opinion of Necker, I do not find stated on such authority as would justify my giving an account of it. It would appear certain, however, that he in the end sanctioned the adoption of Mounier's advice. That advice was ultimately followed, and at ten o'clock it was announced to the assembly, that the king gave his unconditional sanction to the proposed laws.

The scenes of confusion, however, did not cease, although the assembly used various means to put an end to them ; and a little before twelve o'clock the president proposed that the whole members should proceed in a body to the palace, to ensure the safety of the royal family. Mirabeau, however, suggested that a deputation only should be sent, and spoke of the dignity of the assembly.

“Our dignity is in our duty,” replied Mounier.

But Mirabeau succeeded, and the president himself, with only one or two colleagues, proceeded to the palace. By this time Lafayette had arrived with the national guard of Paris ; and he began the proceedings of that night — which must have been through life the most terrible of remembrances to a man of honour and feeling — by assuring the king, and three times assuring Mounier, that he would answer for the tranquillity of the place, and the inviolability of the palace. Having given these assurances, for which there was not

the slightest reasonable foundation, except in his own good intentions, and having established some posts to keep the multitude in awe, Lafayette not only retired from the palace, but went to bed and to sleep; and ere he woke from that fatal slumber, the mob had attacked and forced the barracks of the body guard, massacred several of their number, broken into the palace itself, and slaying some of the most gallant defenders of the king, penetrated even to the chamber of the queen herself. She had but time to escape into the apartments of the king.

Lafayette returned immediately that he was made aware of what had taken place; but he only succeeded in staying the effusion of blood. It was suggested to the multitude that the king should be removed to Paris; Lafayette advised him to consent; and the most awful procession, perhaps, that ever was known, began to move towards the French capital. The king, the queen, the royal children, surrounded by a fierce and ungovernable multitude, accompanied by a large body of those deputies, whose imprudence, selfishness, vanity, and ambition had combined to cast away, and render fruitless, the mighty power intrusted to them of regenerating a nation, followed by an immense body of men armed against the royal authority, and preceded by the bloody heads of two of the most gallant defenders of their betrayed and insulted monarch, marched on towards Paris, towards captivity, injury, insult, and death, amidst the frantic ravings of wild and ferocious incendiaries, and the insults, abuse, and ribaldry of drunken, depraved, and infuriated women.

Necker followed the royal family to the capital, determined not to leave the king as long as there was the slightest chance of really serving him. During the preceding events,—the attack upon Versailles, and the removal of the king, he had been agitated by the deepest grief, horror, and apprehension. That apprehension, however, was in no degree for himself;

for his popularity was still too great to allow him to entertain fears for his personal safety. But the imminent danger to which the king and queen were exposed moved all the finest feelings of his nature, and while he resolved to exert himself to the utmost for the monarch, and to expose himself to any degree of personal risk for that object, he forgot that his counsels had never been fully confided in, that his advice had never been completely followed, and that in all probability, under circumstances of still greater danger, the same would be the case.

Necker, however, now combined with Lafayette to do what he could to procure peace and order. By his sanction and concurrence, the duke of Orleans was sent away from Paris on a mission to the court of London. The baron de Bezenval, who had been saved from the first effect of popular fury, was now brought to trial before a regular tribunal, and was acquitted ; and some hope seemed for a short time to beam upon France, and show, in prospect, the restoration of the power of the law. But the national assembly itself, which had been at first alarmed by the excesses of the 5th and 6th of October, soon recommenced the pursuit of the same system, which had already produced such terrible results. The deputies virtually took the entire management of the finances into their own hands ; and the first resource of the assembly was to deprive the clergy of their property. Assignats were then issued ; the credit of the country was gone ; the revolution advanced with fearful steps ; tumults and contentions took place between the national guard and the people ; excesses were daily committed ; and an armed force of pikemen, amounting in Paris to fifty thousand, and in the minor towns in the proportion of about two to one of the national guard, were instituted and trained, undoubtedly, for the purpose of keeping that body in check.

Shortly after, other immense issues of assignats took place : at one time eight hundred millions were issued ;

and of course they daily decreased in value. To such an extent did the depression go, that two hundred thousand francs were at one time given in assignats to a relation of the writer of these* pages, for the payment of a debt of about ninety pounds. Such was the depreciation of this species of money, which at that period of anarchy was in reality worth nothing, as depending upon public faith, which was daily violated. It had not, indeed, reached that point of depression at the time we speak of; but the evil had been carried to an extent quite sufficient to show Necker that every financial measure that he could take would be utterly in vain.

He continued, however, for some time longer to oppose the torrent, continually raising his voice against the more democratic proceedings of the assembly, struggling against the abolition of titles of nobility, and doing all that he could to prevent the general confiscation of the property of the church. We must, indeed, acknowledge that the charge made against him by Dumont is not altogether unjust.

"I had upon this object" (*i. e.* the property of the clergy), says Dumont, "my own particular opinion. It is, that we are not required to offer up victims for the public good, and that it was unjust to pillage the clergy to pay the national debt." He goes on to say, "M. Necker himself had not observed this principle. He had never ceased to reduce, to retrench, to economise, without troubling himself with the interest of the individuals stripped; and even when they were not deprived of absolute necessities, it was thought that favour was shown them."

However that may be, and though Necker, in order to save the state, might have committed some acts of injustice, which set a bad example to the people, he now laboured anxiously, strenuously, and at great risk to himself, to oppose the sweeping and iniquitous proceedings of the national assembly. Step by step he lost, entirely, his popularity, and with it all means of serving the king. He was not yet trusted en-

tirely by Louis ; his own health had suffered greatly by the immense exertions he had made, and the cares and anxieties he had endured ; a large body of the most noble, most firm, the most disinterested of the deputies had already set him the example of quitting the scene of contention ; and at length, shortly after the famous meeting in the *Champ de Mars*, he demanded the king's permission to retire from the ministry.

That permission was immediately granted, it would appear ; but he had still to apply for the consent of the national assembly, and he announced his purpose of resigning, in language full of eloquence and feeling. The assembly, however, received it with dark indifference ; and he almost immediately set out, in the month of September 1790, in order to return to his native country. He well knew by this time, that his popularity, in Paris at least, was gone ; but he was probably not prepared to find himself generally hated through the country. The towns which had sent forth their multitudes, just a year before, to draw his carriage along the road, and had offered him honours seldom even shown to a sovereign, now assailed him with insult, or attempted to stop him on his passage.

At Arcis-sur-Aube he was actually arrested, and had to appeal to the national assembly for permission to continue his journey. Its consent was obtained ; but it was luckily not applied for at a later period, for six months more would, in all probability, have brought Necker's head to the scaffold, as the natural, and almost inevitable consequence of past popularity in revolutionary times.

The rest of Necker's life, after his arrival in Switzerland, passed comparatively in peace. He lived tranquilly at Copet, and with as much happiness as could attend a man who had seen the best years of his life, and the noblest exertions of his mind, spent and employed in vain ; who beheld a master that he had loved and served, whose virtues he reverenced, and whose throne he had endeavoured to secure upon a reasonable basis, sacri-

ficed to the blind fury of a people in a state of political insanity.

The life of Necker as a statesman was now over, and what remained may be considered more as the life of a literary man, although he published a number of eloquent works in defence of his own conduct, and that of the king, and also some others upon abstract questions of policy. He now, however, tasted, for the first time purely, the pleasures of domestic life ; and with his daughter, the celebrated madame de Staël, and his wife, whom he had loved alone through life, he lived in the utmost unity till the death of the latter in 1794, shortly after she had published her celebrated work upon divorce. She was deeply and permanently regretted by Necker, and his only consolation was in his daughter, in whose literary celebrity he took great pride.

Necker lived to see the evils and the excesses of the French revolution terminate in the establishment of a military despotism under Napoleon Bonaparte. But before that period he had written his famous work called "Last Views of Politics and Finance," in which he exposed with a skilful hand the yet undeveloped tendency of those events and actions which were leading Napoleon to the height of power. Whether it was to see so much light thrown upon the designs which he had conceived, by the pen of the experienced statesman, before those designs were ripe for execution, and while their success was yet doubtful,—or whether it was that the firm tone of constitutional liberty which, notwithstanding the events that had taken place, still breathed through all the writings of Necker as an immovable principle which no external accidents could shake, seemed likely to Napoleon to arm his opponents with fresh arguments against the encroachments of power,—certain it is, that the anger of the aspiring man who then swayed the destinies of France was greatly irritated by the production of this work, and, attributing some share of it to madame de Staël

herself, he turned his indignation upon her, being withheld by many considerations from venting it upon Necker.

At the time of the production of this work Necker was seventy years of age, and his health, which had been declining, gave way altogether about two years after. At length, on the 9th of April 1804, this celebrated statesman died at Geneva, generally and sincerely regretted. He was fully aware, it would seem, of the approach of his dissolution, and met his fate with perfect resolution and Christian fortitude. The fortune which he left, though considerable, had been rendered greatly less than it otherwise would have been, not only by the private bounties which he continually exercised, but by his own generosity and magnanimity in refusing to withdraw from the nearly bankrupt treasury of France that portion of his private fortune which he had placed therein, in order to obtain for the starving people of the capital a supply during the period of their utmost distress.

That people repaid his generous conduct by confiscating the sum in the end of the year 1792, together with all the rest of his property in France of every kind whatsoever, and his name was at the same time inscribed upon the list of proscribed emigrants. The cause of this conduct, which is one amongst the many black spots of the revolution, was, that Necker at that time published a noble address to the French people in favour of his former master, whom they were about to put to death ; but it is probable that Necker considered the confiscation of his property as the last grand tribute which the French nation could pay to his honesty and sincerity.

It is probable that few more virtuous men ever lived than James Necker, and the whole course of his life presents the picture of a man of the most amiable character, of the highest talents, of very considerable firmness of mind, of much self-devotion, of clearness, penetration, activity, industry, struggling, and struggling

in vain, with the circumstances of the time in which he lived. That he made one or two great political mistakes can scarcely be doubted ; that he added one or two bars to the revolutionary ladder cannot well be denied ; but it is a ~~very~~ great question whether, if Necker himself had not added those bars, the people would not have taken two steps for one, and mounted but the more rapidly ; and there cannot be any question as to the fact that, had any of the other persons who surrounded Louis XVI. been in the place of Necker, the progress of the revolution would have been ten times more speedy than it was.

The assertion of Napoleon Bonaparte, that Necker caused the revolution, is borne out by no facts whatsoever. There may have been moments in which he could perhaps have stopped it, or at least have rendered it safe, and perhaps made it a blessing instead of a disaster. But the seed of the revolution was planted long before the father of Necker was born. The young plant was nourished under a long series of monarchs and ministers. It was trained up and taught to blossom before Necker was in power ; and he and his master had no further share than in being led, by a mistake in regard to its nature, to gather the bitter fruits of the tree that others had planted.

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